

**Rescue and Revival in Detroit Anti-Sex Trafficking Ministry: How sex industry outreach and the fight against human trafficking is reviving American evangelicals**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

To survivor leaders and those who support them.

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## **PREFACE**

Research and writing for this project with a series of public revelations of sexual predation that introduced analytical challenges on a near daily basis. All dissertation writers must resist the temptation to alter their thesis in order to speak to the news cycle. However, in my case this challenge was acute. These events spoke directly to the issues discussed in this study, especially questions about the types of individuals who are charged with sexual crimes as well as the types of victim who are believed and on what grounds. In some instances, they also impacted me personally. In future writing I hope to reflect more deeply on the specific ways in which the following events challenged my thinking.

The idea that rich and powerful public figures have long preyed upon sexual victims is not new. However, since 2017 public attitude has shifted in ways that enabled more victims to come forward and secure justice for these crimes. Primary examples of this change include the conviction of media executive Harvey Weinstein (2018), charges against the late financier Jeffrey Epstein (2015-2019), the arrest of businessman Robert Kraft (2019), and ongoing allegations against US president Donald Trump.

Since the before the announcement of his presidential campaign in 2015 and well into his term of office, President Donald Trump has faced multiple accusations of sexual assault. Additionally, his immigration detention policy, which separated children from their families in part by placing many in foster care system in the United States, have placed a generation of migrant children at risk of sexual exploitation. Yet, his supporters, many of whom are the most

vocal proponents of anti-sex trafficking laws and programs, have largely brushed off these personal challenges and policy risks.

From 2017 to 2018, former USA gymnastics athletic trainer and Michigan State University faculty member Larry Nasser was convicted on multiple charges of child pornography and child sex abuse. These revelations, which stretch back to Nasser's time as a Detroit-area high school coach, sent ripple effects throughout my local community in Ann Arbor. As did similar scandals at the University of Michigan, including the conviction of U-M pediatrician Dr. Mark Hoeltzel (2018) and lawsuits alleging sexual abuse by the late Dr. Robert Anderson (2020).

In addition to these public revelations of sexual exploitation and abuse (which continue to be debated in the public sphere), throughout the writing of this project, I also learned new information about some members of my community that shook my intellectual foundations. Specifically, these include the recent conviction of a cousin (a Catholic seminarian) on federal child pornography charges, the uncovering of multiple historic wills in my family that identify the intergenerational transfer of enslaved individuals, and the suicide of a beloved high school teacher following allegations that he maintained a sexual affair with a minor student. In future writing I hope to reflect more deeply on the specific ways in which these events impacted my research and writing process.



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

FBO – Faith Based Organization

GAO – United States Government Accountability Office

DOD – Department of Defense

ED – Department of Education

HHS – Department of Health and Human Services

ASPE - Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

ORR – Office of Refugee Resettlement

OTIP – Office on Trafficking in Persons

NHTVAP – National Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Program

UAC – Unaccompanied Alien Children

URMP- Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program

DHS – Department of Homeland Security

ICE – Immigration and Customs Enforcement

DOI – Department of Interior

JATT – Joint Anti-Trafficking Task Force

DOJ – US Department of Justice

ACT – Anti-Trafficking Coordination Team

BJS – Bureau of Justice Statistics

ECM - Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking

HPTU – Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit

HTRS – Human Trafficking Reporting System

OJP – Office of Justice Programs

OVC – Office for Victims of Crime

OVCTTAC - Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center

USAO – United States Attorneys’ Office

DOL – US Department of Labor

DOS – US Department of State

OTP – Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (aka TIP Office)



DSG - Development Services Group

ILO - International Labor Organization

NAE - National Association of Evangelicals

NCMEC - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

UN – United Nations

UNDOC - United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

OHCHR - Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights

WHFOI - White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative

## **ABSTRACT**

Despite evidence indicating an overall decrease in formal religious affiliation in the United States, the past ten years have seen a dramatic expansion of the faith-based non-profit sector. This study explicates this trend in relation to changing modes of public engagement and new forms of religious expression within America's dominant religious affiliation: Evangelical Christianity. To do so it focuses on a prominent subset of the faith-based sector: the evangelical movement to end human trafficking and abolish 'modern day slavery.'

Extant literature has analyzed religiously motivated anti-trafficking activism as an effort to enact morally conservative sex and gender reforms, focusing primarily on impacts to those directly involved in commercial sexual activity. This project focuses on the experiences of interveners. Taking Detroit, Michigan as a case study, this study investigates the politics and economics of faith-based public-private anti-trafficking partnerships. It also follows evangelical volunteers who combine missionary efforts with intervention outreach at sites where sexual services are sold. Over three years of ethnographic fieldwork primarily in Detroit, Michigan (also Chicago, Miami, and Portland, Oregon), I attended rallies, trainings, and closed-door government task force meetings. I interviewed church leaders, volunteers, law enforcement, and social service providers and observed weekly outreach efforts in strip clubs, massage parlors, and outdoor locations where sexual services are sold. I also examined archival accounts from

historical anti-prostitution campaigns and analyzed publicly available financial and tax data from faith-based non-profit groups and federal anti-trafficking programs.

This study demonstrates how the emergence of human trafficking as a prominent social issue has driven the expansion of American evangelicalism, by directing public investment to faith-based groups, by transforming the purview of evangelical social justice, and by facilitating opportunities for evangelical volunteers to pursue ministerial relationships with sex workers. To do so, this project investigates the racial dynamics of abolitionist rhetoric. It argues that the contemporary evangelical anti-trafficking movement extends the goals of historical religious reform campaigns, which leveraged anxieties about commercial sexual activity to defend racial segregation and to promote private philanthropy over government intervention. This project also analyzes speaker stance in outreach interactions in order to problematize evangelical discourses of rescue, intervention, and missionization. It argues that within the evangelical anti-trafficking movement, domestic outreach to the sex industry represents an emergent form of relational ministry. Specifically, outreach represents a distinct interactional framework whose immediate goal is not removal (*i.e.* to remove from perceived conditions of exploitation). But is instead primarily interested in asserting an alternative regime of sociality. Namely, a spiritually-based homosociality whose efficacy hinges on its contrast with remunerative sexual intimacy in outreach locales. As such, this project contributes to the field of Critical Anti-Human Trafficking Studies, the Anthropology of Religion, and Linguistic Anthropology. This project also speaks to the studies of public intervention, social movements, and race, sex, and religion in American public life.

Keywords: Evangelical Christianity, Human Trafficking, Slavery, Homosociality, Stance, Interaction, Missionaries, Social Justice, Faith-Based Organizations, Organizational Policy, Trauma

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

The recent emergence of human trafficking as a prominent social issue in the United States has coincided with a rapid expansion of the domestic faith-based non-profit sector. Arguing for a causal link between these trends, this project investigates changing modes of public engagement and new forms of spiritual expression within America's dominant religious affiliation: Evangelical Christianity. Specifically, this study explores recent transformations in evangelical public discourse, which increasingly prioritizes social-service style outreach, self-help themes, and interpersonal relationships over formal religious study and explicit proselytization (Bielo 2011, 2012; Elisha 2011, 2015; Miller 1997). To do so, this project focuses on a prominent subset of the faith-based sector: the evangelical movement to end human trafficking and abolish 'modern day slavery.'

Extant literature has analyzed religiously motivated anti-trafficking activism in the context of efforts to enact morally conservative sex and gender reforms (Bernstein 2010; Block 2004; Campbell and Zimmerman 2014; Soderlund 2005; Zimmerman 2013). Such work demonstrates how contemporary abolitionist anti-trafficking rhetoric integrates conservative sex and gender ideology with appeals to 'freedom' and liberty in order to mobilize public concern about commercial sexual activity (Choi-Fitzpatrick 2014; Zimmerman 2013). In doing so, such work largely focuses on the impact of religiously-motivated 'rescue and rehabilitation' schemes

on trafficking victims, sex workers, and consumers (Agustin 2007; Chapkis 2005; Lerum *et al* 2012; Musto 2008; Saunders 2005).

This study focuses on the experiences of interveners. Taking Detroit, Michigan as a case study, this study analyzes the political and financial structures that sustain regional faith-based public-private anti-trafficking partnerships. It also tracks the experiences of evangelical volunteers who combine missionary outreach with anti-trafficking intervention at sites where sexual services are sold: strip clubs, massage parlors, and street-based solicitation sites. In doing so, this project raises broader questions about the contemporary purview of evangelical social justice efforts. It also problematizes conceptions of missionization, rescue, and intervention.

The present chapter begins by highlighting the questions that drive this study in order to summarize this project's main claims and contributions. It then provides a brief overview of contemporary Christianity evangelicalism, tracking the historical development of those elements that inspire, enable, and shape the evangelical anti-trafficking movement: institutional independence and structural diversity, outward-facing public engagement, and relational ministry. Having provided ethnographic and historical context about Evangelical Christianity in the United States, this chapter then addresses the overall structure of this study, reviewing its research methodology and outlining the organization of this manuscript. This chapter closes by discussing some of the ethical considerations that motivated and constrained this project.

## **Main Claims and Contributions of this Study**

Previous studies have problematized the use of the term “modern day slavery” to describe human trafficking. Scholars note that this term is broadly deterministic, frequently used in ways that collapse instances of consensual labor (which may or not entail exploitative work conditions) with instances of criminal labor exploitation, especially confusing consensual sex work and criminal sex trafficking (Bernstein 2012; Brace *et al* 2018; Doezenia 2010; Hill 2017; Gallagher 2017; Siller 2016; Weitzer 2007; Weitzer and Ditmore 2010). Scholars attribute this conceptual collapse to the efforts of anti-prostitution feminists and religious conservatives who joined forces to influence the drafting and passage of contemporary U.S. anti-trafficking laws in order to prioritize sexual exploitation over other forms of human trafficking (Berman 2006; Bernstein 2007; Gee and Smith 2015; Soderlund 2005). Historical studies link modern day slavery discourse to Progressive Era anti-prostitution campaigns, noting how contemporary activists employ similar rhetoric to compare their work to the historical movement to abolish state-sanctioned chattel slavery (Bunting and Quirk 2017; Gagnon 2006; Gallagher 2017; Kempadoo 2015; Murphy 2019). This project builds on such literature in ways that contribute to the field of Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies and to the Anthropology of Religion, specifically the study of Evangelical Christianity in the United States.

I have organized my analysis around what I identify as three key puzzles in the evangelical anti-trafficking movement in order to derive two primary sets of conclusions.

This project investigates the racial dynamics of contemporary anti-trafficking rhetoric, analyzing how explicit references to African American emancipation and civil rights are invoked in order to emphasize the need to protect white suburban white women and girls. This co-option of civil rights discourse in contemporary abolitionist rhetoric raises questions about the

movement's origins and implications, especially when analyzed in the context of the majority African-American city of Detroit. (In Detroit, evangelical anti-trafficking outreach primarily entails white suburban women reaching out to African American women who are involved in commercial sexual activity.) This study analyzes activist public speech, focusing on audience responses to such use of abolitionist rhetoric. It investigates how the evangelical anti-trafficking movement extends the goals of historical campaigns to promote racial segregation, which initially triggered the political mobilization of American evangelicals in the mid-twentieth century. It also analyzes how the technologies of sex industry outreach enable evangelicals to resolve various contradictions between abolitionist narratives and their firsthand experiences, including with regard to race.

Additionally, the emergence of human trafficking as a prominent social issue in the United States has coincided with a proliferation of faith-based organizations that partner with government agencies to identify and serve trafficking victims, as well as evangelical volunteer groups that conduct direct outreach at locations where they believe sexual exploitation occurs. This raises questions about the extent to which policy makers are leveraging federal anti-human trafficking programs in order to support and promote religious entities. To explore this thesis, this study tracks religious entities' influence on historical anti-prostitution campaigns, as well as contemporary anti-trafficking programs. It analyzes survey responses from contemporary health and human service providers who are involved in fighting against human trafficking, as well as publicly available financial and tax data for faith-based non-profit groups and federal programs that fund grants to these providers.

Finally, despite public statements that they "rescue" people and "save" lives, during outreach, volunteers from evangelical anti-trafficking groups did not remove people from

exploitative situations, nor did they tell them to leave their jobs or engage in explicit acts of proselytization. This raises questions about who or what the intended object of outreach intervention might be. This study argues that the primary goal of outreach interaction is to establish and sustain personal relationships with individuals who are involved in commercial sexual activity. To analyze how volunteers resolve apparent contradictions between their publicly stated religious and anti-trafficking goals and the interactional goals of outreach, this study applies linguistic anthropological approaches to analyze stance in face-to-face interaction.

This project concludes that despite reported reductions in religious affiliation, the emergence of human trafficking as a prominent social issue in the United States is driving an expansion of American evangelicalism by directing public investment to faith-based groups, invigorating evangelical social justice paradigms, and by facilitating opportunities for evangelical volunteers to pursue ministerial relationships with individuals who engage in commercial sexual activity. This project argues that public investment in faith-based anti-trafficking programs reflects a historical effort to privatize social services. It also links the rapid increase of evangelical concern about domestic human trafficking to persistent racial anxieties, specifically a desire to protect women and girls of European descent.

Further, this project concludes that despite the absence of widespread identification and removal of trafficking victims, direct outreach to strip clubs and street-based solicitation sites is nonetheless vital to the evangelical anti-trafficking movement because it enables volunteers to navigate contradictions between the publicly stated social justice goals of abolitionist discourse and its implicit racial and political ones. This study argues that within the evangelical anti-trafficking movement, ‘outreach’ represents both a distinct interactional framework and an increasingly prominent form of evangelical religious expression: relational ministry. Within anti-



trafficking ministries, the efficacy of outreach was determined not by the immediate removal of individuals from sexually exploitative situations, nor by their religious confession. Rather, the efficacy of outreach was determined primarily by the ability of volunteers to establish and sustain positive relationships with individuals at sites where sexual services were sold.

Successful outreach intervention thus involved physically co-present enactments of spiritually-based homosocial intimacy, which were rendered visible as such due to their contrast with other forms of intimacy that volunteers associated with outreach locales: remunerative and sexual. In this setting, the technologies of outreach enabled volunteers to resolve apparent contradictions between conservative attitudes about sex, gender, and race (which are implicit in abolitionist discourse) and the interactional demands of social-justice-oriented relational ministry, which entailed physical co-presence and acts of hospitality in pursuit of ‘authentic’ personal relationships with the targets of missionization: human trafficking victims and sex workers as well as their customers, managers, and traffickers.

Before discussing the methods and structure of this project, it is important to first define the scope of Evangelical Christianity in the United States, its core beliefs, and its key features that enable and shape the domestic evangelical anti-trafficking movement.

### **A Brief Introduction to Evangelical Christianity**

Evangelicalism in the United States represents a form of conservative Christian spiritual expression that prioritizes outward facing public engagement, enacted through networks of church and para-church organizations, which promote conservative public policies and facilitate relational ministries that prioritize self-help themes. This study uses the term “evangelical anti-trafficking movement” to describe a vast network of conservative politicians, activist leaders,

faith-based social service providers, and ministry volunteers who work to raise public awareness about human trafficking, advocate for the passage of anti-trafficking laws, partner with government agencies to provide services for trafficking victims, and who work to identify and befriend potential victims by conducting relational ministry at sites where they believe exploitation occurs: strip clubs, massage parlors, and street-based solicitation sites.

Multiple core features of the evangelical faith movement have fostered the rise and expansion of evangelical anti-trafficking activist movement. The following discussion tracks the historical development of these features in order to analyze features of Evangelical Christianity that are relevant to my broader claim that the emergence of human trafficking as a prominent social issue has driven the expansion of the American evangelicalism. Specifically, this discussion: (1) defines evangelicalism, (2) describes the institutional structure of this religious movement, and describes the historical development and theological underpinning of its key features, specifically (3) outward-facing public engagement and (4) relational ministry, which stresses self-help themes.

(1) For the purposes of this study, “Evangelical Christianity” describes a theological tradition, an institutional network, and a demographic subset of Christianity.

Evangelical Christians represent the single largest religious group in the United States. According to a 2014 study by the Pew Research Center, more than twenty-five percent of American adults self-identify with Evangelical Christianity (Masci, Mahamed, and Smith 2018). Survey research indicates that individuals who describe themselves as evangelical or “born again” Christians are primarily Protestant, socially conservative, and of European descent (Jones *et al* 2011; Miller 2009; Newport and Carroll 2005; Pew Research Center 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018). While contemporary evangelicals are notably concentrated in the Baptist, charismatic

Protestant, Lutheran, Pentecostal, and Reformed Christian churches, evangelicalism also encompasses many congregations that are otherwise unaffiliated with a mainline Protestant groups, including some Catholics (Bauder *et al* 2011; Eskridge 2015; Skirbekk, Stonawski and Goujon 2011, Watt 1990). This institutional diversity presents methodological challenges for scholars studying the evangelical aggregate.<sup>1</sup>

Evangelical affiliation in the United States is largely sustained through networks of independent non-denominational para-church Protestant Christian political advocacy groups, missionary organizations, educational institutions, and therapeutic ministries. Notable examples include the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), Campus Crusade for Christ, the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, and the World Evangelical Alliance, as well as private colleges and universities such as Azusa Pacific, Bob Jones, Liberty, and Wheaton (Ammerman 1987, 4; Bartowski 2004; Miller 2009, 2010; Quicke and Robinson 2000; Watt 1991, 157).

(2) Evangelical para-church organizations share a common commitment to core principles of evangelical belief, which they articulate in their respective statements of institutional mission and purpose: biblical inerrancy, justification by faith, and a universal outward gospel call.

Evangelical theology is characterized by belief that the Christian Bible is without error; an internally coherent set of teachings that were divinely revealed for the benefit of humans and which provide a guide for all aspects of private and public life (Bauder *et al* 2011; Malley 2004; Marsden 1980; Spittler 1994, 103; Watt 1990, 36). In particular, evangelicalism emphasizes biblical passages that assert the literal divinity of the figure of Jesus Christ (as the Messiah prophesied in Hebrew scripture), as well as passages that describe the universality of the “gospel

call.” Specifically, evangelicalism asserts that all humans are invited to achieve eternal salvation merely and exclusively by accepting the divinity of Jesus Christ (Marsden 1991, 65; Stanley 2013). A commitment to these theological principles accounts for the historical diversification of the movement.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Evangelical Christian leaders criticized mainline Protestant churches for pursuing what they perceived to be an increasingly figurative approach to the interpretation Biblical scripture. Theological debates about the need to “return to the fundamentals of the Bible” contributed to the proliferation of new Protestant traditions and corresponding conflicts among them (Carpenter 1997; Marsden 1991; Watt 1991).<sup>2</sup> In reaction to the increasingly legalistic approaches to defining the parameters of “true” Christian belief (especially notions of 2nd and 3rd association), some leaders embraced a more ‘inclusive’ approach.

(3) Whereas previous fundamentalist proselytizing emphasized eschatological narratives, post-WWII evangelical leaders emphasized that all individuals could achieve salvation by establishing a personal relationship with the divine figure of Jesus Christ and by nurturing that relationship by studying the Bible in order to adopt its teachings into every aspect of their lives.

These “heirs of the fundamentalist movement” were “determined to reach out to a broader constituency of conservative Protestants. And that determination met with considerable success,” (Watt 1990, 161). Postwar celebrity preachers established new forms of religious institutions and utilized new broadcast technologies to reach beyond the confines of their individual congregations. Scholars link the emergence of the “evangelical public” to a network of unaffiliated non-denominational Christian radio and television media outlets, which promote socially conservative political positions and life teachings that are derived from biblical scripture

(for example see Apostolidis 2000; Balmer 2006, 2014; Henershott 2004; Oosterbaan 2008).

Independent “outreach” ministries established by celebrity preachers during this period continue to operate as the arbiters of evangelicalism today, especially the NAE and the BGEA.

The emergence of a network of non-denominational Protestant organizations dedicated to outward-facing public engagement transformed the American religious landscape, including in ways that directly contributed to the rise of Evangelical Christianity as a formidable force in American politics. Whereas previous religious leaders largely eschewed the direct infusion of religion in political debates, starting in the 1960s, conservative politicians increasingly gained public support by explicitly invoking biblical references in order to appeal to conservative Christian voters broadly (Williams 2008). Scholars studying the so-called “culture wars” of the late twentieth century emphasize how conservative Protestants and Catholics alike leveraged biblical narratives about sex, gender, and the family in order to generate public support for policies that reduce women’s access to reproductive healthcare, limit legal definitions of marriage, and that resist expanding ideas about gender and sexuality (for example see Bartkowski 2001, 36-37; Ginsburg 1989; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2013; Kintz 1997; Sullivan-Blum 2009).

The politicization of Protestant Christianity also manifests in ways that do not involve explicit religious references. As Anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano observes, fundamentalist exegesis accounts for the content of policy that fundamentalist Christian leaders advocate (conservative), and also for their philosophy of law (textual originalism) (Crapanzano 2000). Scholars studying anti-abortion activism in the 1980s documented how conservative Catholic female activists invoked traditional gender norms about the appropriate domain of female activity, to both justify their political leadership in highly contentious public campaigns and also

to temper confrontational aggression with displays of interactional kindness in other settings (Ginsburg 1989; Kintz 1997). Similarly, in her ethnographic account of debates around a local anti-gay ordinance in rural Oregon, Arlene Stein observed that the Bible-based homophobic rhetoric espoused by proponents of this ordinance belied the interactional warmth these same individuals displayed within their community and in their face-to-face interactions with her personally as a Jewish lesbian woman, interactional norms that likewise originated from residents' faith commitments (Stein 2001, 76-88). The project takes its starting point from the literature that attends to the implicit contradictions between exclusionary religious rhetoric and religious commitments to outward-facing public engagement.

While many of the theological beliefs and institutional characteristics discussed thus far are not unique to evangelical Christianity, the notion that religious conversion is universally achievable through public emotional displays of conversion represents a distinctly evangelical ideology. According to evangelical author Joseph Dillow, as church leaders struggled to define themselves as "true" believers and to demarcate the "authentic from the pseudo" christianities during the "stadium revivals" of the 1960s, evangelical personalities such as Billy Graham and Chuck Colson emerged as leaders of a movement where "all individuals, no matter their background," could be brought into the "fold" of "Bible Believing Christians," specifically by being "radically born again" into a "new life" by "accepting Jesus Christ" (Dillow 2004 personal communication). In widely televised sermons and public altar calls, postwar evangelical leaders encouraged individual believers to share the intimate details of their lives in dramatic emotional displays (Stanley 2013; Miller 2009, 2010). In the context, public testimony, not formal religious education, emerged as the primary outwardly visible marker of authentic spirituality. Previous scholars have analyzed the function of public testimony specifically by tracking biblical

fundamentalist themes. Such studies argue that public testimonial confession allows individual believers reconfigure their personal histories in ways that align with biblical narratives, reasserting biblical truths for themselves and their listeners (Crapanzano 2000, 31-32; Harding 1987, 2000, 36; Moon 2005). However, this project emphasizes a different innovation.

(4) The postwar evangelical model, which prioritized personal fulfillment as the primary indicator of authentic spirituality, has transformed evangelical sociality, impacting how evangelicals represent themselves to themselves, to one another, and to the broader public.

By de-emphasizing the importance of formal religious education as a precursor for conversion and instead emphasizing the need for believers to demonstrate their conversion through public emotional displays, post-war evangelical leaders promoted a vision in which the radical inner spiritual transformation of conversion (“rebirth”) was understood to be continually evident in outwardly visible signs of personal fulfillment (“new life”). The theological emphasis on personal fulfillment has inspired the rise of a vast evangelical self-help industry. Specifically, countless therapeutic ministries, support groups, and self-help books, which integrate biblical and psychological teachings about gender, sexuality, and family life (for example see Bartkowski 2000; Claussen 2000; Cole 2005; Crapanzano 2000, 31-32; Elisha 2015; Erzen 2000; Griffith 1997, 1999, 2003). It has also inspired new forms of church ministry that seek to encourage spiritual and moral growth primarily by facilitating the formation of personal relationships (rather than formal religious study).

“Relational ministry” integrates psychotherapeutic principles with religious education in order to promote moral and spiritual growth through mutual accountability. This approach draws heavily on psychotherapeutic methods that integrate spirituality into family and marriage counseling and substance abuse recovery programs (Schults and Sandage 2006; Tomlinson *et al*

2016). In the church setting, relational ministry is most often associated with therapeutic retreats and “small group” ministries. In his multi-year national study of non-denominational evangelical churches in the US, Sociologist Donald Miller observes that relational approaches to ministry are those that seek to foster spiritual growth primarily by promoting mutual accountability among church members. Principally, relational ministry seeks to facilitate acts of personal sharing and listening in small groups settings and at therapeutic retreats, where self-help discourses dominate (Miller 1997). In the context of large mega-church congregations, whose members number in the thousands, close-knit small groups provide opportunities for personal connection, community service, and intensive religious study (Bielo 2012; Elisha 2008; Luhrman 2012). However, unlike traditional Bible study studies, small groups are largely self-organized, not led by scriptural or clerical ‘experts.’ The activity in small groups meetings primarily involves the mutual sharing of stories of personal challenge and faith formation, rather formal scriptural study. Practices of solitary scriptural study, prayer, and contemplation, while still important, are de-emphasized in favor of practices that foster mutual accountability, emotional interdependence, and deep relationships among believers.

This transformation is also evident in changes in evangelical public speech. In his ethnographic study of evangelical mega churches in the southern United States, Anthropologist Omri Elisha observes that evangelical testimonial narratives are increasingly characterized by therapeutic and self-help narratives rather than explicit references to biblical scripture (Elisha 2015). Evidence from Europe suggests that this shift represents broader trends. In their study of televised conversion narratives in the Netherlands from the 1980s to the present, Klaver *et al* observed a shift in modes of authentication over time. In contrast to the testimonial conversion stores of the 1980s, in which speakers established the authenticity of their conversion through



explicit “biblical references and religious insider language” associated with the “Evangelical sub-culture,” since the mid-2000s, explicit references to “God, Jesus, and the Bible” have been largely absent. Instead, they observe, “[p]rominent is the everyday conversational style of talking, loaded with therapeutic and emotional language” (Klaver *et al* 2017). As a new mode of self-representation, relational ministry has transformed evangelical modes of outward-facing public engagement.

A discussion of relational ministry is relevant to the present study because the relational approach enables evangelicals to conduct Christian ministry in social domains that are broadly thought to be secular. In his critical analysis of relational ministry, evangelical theological Andrew Root argues that “[r]elational forms of ministry have been embedded within evangelicalism’s subcultural identity as a strategy of engagement within a pluralistic culture,” (Root 2007, 17). This study takes its point of departure from Root’s critique. It argues that the evangelical anti-trafficking movement leverages the principles of relational ministry in two primary ways. First, faith-based organizations (FBOs) that work with human trafficking victims leverage therapeutic discourse to simultaneously satisfy the concerns of their secular and religious partners. Specifically, the conditions of relational ministry allow FBOs to establish partnerships with public agencies and to secure public funding while at the same time maintaining their spiritual credentials among religiously motivated supporters who understand therapeutic interventions as spiritual ones. Second, relational ministry accounts for the goals and technologies entailed in evangelical outreach in the commercial sex industry. In this context, ministry primarily involves establishing and maintaining relationships with the targets of intervention, rather than proselytizing to them or removing them from potentially exploitative situations. The chapters in Part 2 of this manuscript analyze outreach as a relational ministry.

## **Ethnographic Sources**

This project studies the evangelical anti-human trafficking movement in the United States, focusing in particular on post-industrial Midwest. Taking Detroit, Michigan as a case study, this project explores federal and state anti-human trafficking policies in the context of regional non-profit advocacy efforts and local intervention programs. This study pursues two primary lines of ethnographic inquiry: it tracks religious actors' efforts to shape regional anti-trafficking policy, as well their efforts to intervene directly in the lives of individuals they perceive to be vulnerable to remunerative exploitation through charitable non-profit outreach organization. In doing so, it focuses on three types of ethnographic subjects: organizational entities, public figures, and private individuals.

Over three years of fieldwork primarily in Detroit, Michigan (also Chicago, Miami, and Portland), I attended rallies, trainings, and closed-door government task force meetings. I interviewed church leaders and volunteers, law enforcement, and social service providers. I shadowed weekly missionary efforts in strip clubs, massage parlors, and outdoor locations where sex is traded (nearly three hundred hours in total). I also examined archival accounts from historical anti-prostitution campaigns and analyzed publicly available financial and tax data from federal anti-trafficking programs and faith-based non-profit organizations.

This multi-layered ethnographic research sought to answer the following key questions. Of the various social crisis that merit moral and political concern, why are Evangelicals Christians interested in sex trafficking in particular? How are federal and state-anti-trafficking policies translated on the ground and how do faith-based organizations impact that translation? What social networks, economic structures, and public policies enable faith-based organizations to

partner with government agencies and what does this partnership activity look like? What is ‘faith-based recovery’ in the context of former sex workers and survivors of human trafficking? How do evangelicals ‘build relationships’ with individuals who are involved in remunerative sexual activity and what do they hope to accomplish by doing so?

This study researched three primary categories of ethnographic subjects: organizations, public figures, and private individuals. Criteria for inclusion was primarily based on subjects’ intersecting religious motivations and anti-trafficking goals.

The past fifteen years have seen a dramatic rise in the number and size of Christian organizations whose central purpose is to raise awareness about human trafficking and to intervene directly in the lives of individuals who are identified as being at risk of remunerative sexual exploitation. Research for this project involved tracking hundreds of such groups and their individual members, as well as U.S. government agencies and non-faith-based organizations. However, it focused primarily on faith-based entities and religious-motivated individuals who participated in institutional anti-trafficking activities within the state of Michigan. (Similar Christian groups outside of Michigan were also studied for comparative analysis, as were Michigan-based secular anti-trafficking providers.) Of these, more than fifty were directly observed or consulted for this study. Appendix A “Organizational Entities” presents a partial list of the organizations who are represented in this study, or whose members were consulted or observed for this study. That list also includes summary descriptions for non-profit participants, including religious and financial information.

By studying faith-based entities and their secular counterparts, this study presents a snapshot of one regional organizational network that links evangelical individuals to individuals who have been identified as trafficking victims or who are perceived to be vulnerable to

remunerative sexual exploitation. All organizations studied for this project worked to raise public awareness about human trafficking, by participating in community events, educational programs, and/or by publishing information about human trafficking. A fewer number of these organizations also engaged in practices that brought them into direct contact with real or potential victims: law enforcement, service providers, and outreach ministries. Faith-based organizations included those that combined Christian evangelizing with anti-trafficking efforts, who relied heavily on church volunteers donors, and/or who combined charitable giving with prayer support. (However, some such organizations were registered as non-religious ‘public charities,’ which allowed them to appeal to a wide range of religious and secular audiences.) Additionally, organizations that partnered with such groups, to coordinate referrals or to present at regional anti-trafficking awareness events hosted by local churches, were also studied. Ethnographic data were primarily derived from written notes and audio-recordings collected through direct observation of group activity in public settings, for example: open-door Bible studies, public meetings, community events, and community outreach. Data were also collected from archival sources that were otherwise publicly available, including financial information for government agencies and NGOs, as well as published materials, such as websites, books, and social media posts. Ethnographic data also include handwritten notes and transcripts from interviews with individuals.

With the exception of information collected from public sources or in public settings, organizations represented in this study were informed that their activities were a potential subject of study. Organizations agreed to participate in this study by knowingly permitting the researcher to observe and participate in their activities for the primary purpose of observing and interviewing their members. In some cases, the researcher approached organizations directly,

disclosing the research goals to volunteer coordinators or group leaders in advance when applying to participate in their programs. In other cases, a “snowball” phenomenon occurred. In these instances, representatives from organizations that had heard about the project approached the researcher to voluntarily request involvement.

In situations where individual informed consent was required, the researcher obtained consent verbally. To protect the privacy of individuals, verbal consent was obtained from all interviewees in advance and again at the time of the interviews. In the case of the observational research of public activity, audio-recordings were limited to instances in which individuals had consented to be interviewed, or in which they had no reasonable expectation of privacy. All private individuals who were observed and interviewed for this study have been anonymized in this manuscript. With the exception of public statements made by individuals who would otherwise be considered public figures (e.g. authors, public speakers, public officials), this project uses pseudonyms to refer to people and groups. In instances where the volunteer activities of individuals are analyzed, this project substitutes pseudonyms to refer to private business and organizations where these activities occurs. Private individuals’ demographic details and background information have also been changed to preserve anonymity, but only in ways that do not compromise the study’s main findings.

### **Michigan Human Trafficking Resource Survey (MHTRS)**

Information for this project was also gathered through the Michigan Human Trafficking Resource Survey (MHTRS). As outlined in Appendix B, the MHTRS was a parallel public research survey project that was conducted concurrently with this dissertation, primarily with support from the U-M Rackham Public Scholars Program and the U-M Institute for Research on

Women and Gender (IRWG). The MHTRS is a statewide electronic survey of agencies and organizations in the state of Michigan that seeks to evaluate the region's capacity to provide services for individuals who are identified as victims of human trafficking crimes. MHTRS identifies gaps and redundancies in the types of services currently offered, the locations where they are offered, and the demographics they are prepared to serve. As a public research project, MHTRS provides a snapshot of the current state of services while providing survey tool that can be repeated future years to track changes in the state of services as well as adopted in other regions to assess the state of care. As a comprehensive study of trafficking victim services in Michigan, MHTRS findings are based on 197 responses to a 100-question mix quantitative and qualitative survey as well as more than two years of direct observation among approximately twenty-five community outreach and awareness groups (primarily in SE Michigan).

MHTRS participants were recruited from a population of organizations that were identified as having the potential capacity to service trafficking victims. The MHTRS research sample consisted of 317 organizations that were identified primarily through the author's ethnographic research and also from referral lists provided by the University of Michigan Human Trafficking Law Clinic, the Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force, the Salvation Army, Alternatives for Girls, and other Members of the Joint-Anti Human Trafficking Task Force. The MHTRS research sample also reflects purposeful sampling of organizations that were identified as geographically and culturally representative of broader categories of service providers in the state: government agencies, health and human service providers, advocacy groups, and allied agencies in education and the faith-based community from throughout Michigan and Indian Tribal Nations.

MHTRS was web-based survey using Qualtrics software and consisted of 95 closed and opened-ended items. A link to the survey was distributed via e-mail from May to July 2017. Additional surveys were distributed via Facebook. Three survey reminders were sent to those who had not completed the survey to provide them the chance to participate in the study. A total of 317 survey were distributed to the research sample. Of these, 195 completed the survey for a response rate of 62%.

Analysis of the survey responses is ongoing. Publication of the survey results, as well as the survey itself, is pending completion of the study director's PhD dissertation. Preliminary findings indicate a lack of the following: 1) services for male and transgender individuals; 2) outreach to victims of labor trafficking (as opposed to sex trafficking); 3) "follow-up services;" 4) long-term housing; and 5) mental health services and substance abuse treatment. Notably, of the 29 organizations that reportedly provided "Intensive Case Management," fewer than one third reported that their organizations' provided "Routine Follow-up Services." In addition, while 24/75 of responding organizations reported that they provided some sort of housing, the most described that housing as only "Emergency" (60%) or "Transitional" (30%). Finally, there was a widespread lack of organizations that provide Mental Health Services (16 out of 74) and Substance Abuse Treatment (8 out of 74).

### **Ethical Considerations**

This project was initially motivated by my desire to understand how people change. My research sought to investigate the outwardly visible signs by which 'healing,' 'recovery,' and 'reconciliation' are recognized as such, in order to contribute to anthropological research on stance and moral selfhood (c.f. Du Bois 2007; Goffman 1963, 1974, 1981, 1990; Hill 1995; Irvine 2009; Keane 2011, 2015). In particular, I wanted to understand how people use religion to

affect individual and communal change, including in ways that challenge conventional representations of evangelical identity: former sex workers who leverage their histories to claim religious authority; survivors of sexual assault who invoke patriarchal religious traditions as an act of female liberation; white suburban evangelicals who attempt to inspire religious revival by pursuing personal relationships with African American sex workers at urban strip clubs and solicitation sites. As such, this project is inspired by previous attempts to analyze the Christian women's public engagement in the context of the emotions, beliefs, hopes, and fears that motivate them (c.f. Griffith 1997, 1999, 2003; Kintz 1997; Fessenden 2000, 2002, 2007; Ginsburg 1989; Lawless 1991; Stein 2001).

Despite its primary interest on religious faith, this study's focus on anti-trafficking activism raises questions about the scope of human trafficking and the efficacy of current anti-trafficking policies. Throughout this manuscript, I define human trafficking and provide statistical and narrative depictions of it. However, I do not specify specific policy solutions. Nonetheless, in an attempt to satisfy reader concerns, especially about my own ideological stance towards the subject, I here summarize the landscape of anti-human trafficking policy. Scholars in the field of Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies illustrate how prevailing paradigms of intervention are counterproductive. Policies that remove penalties for sex workers while preserving criminal penalties for customers ("The Swedish Model") or that legalize prostitution as highly regulated industry ("legalization"), are rooted in the belief that the best way to reduce sex trafficking is remove laws that discourage sex workers from reporting exploitation while at the same time discouraging demand for commercial sexual services (Durchslag and Goswami 2008; Raymond 2004; Shively *et al* 2012; Yen 2007). Critics counter that such policies backfire. Domestically, US laws which seek to "end demand" for human trafficking by censoring websites



that market sexual services (FOSTA-SESTA), effectively bar independent sex workers from online advertising platforms. Critics warn that by reducing their ability to reach clients directly and, thus, to operate independently, such laws will increase incidences of high risk forms of sex work: outdoor soliciting and “pimping” (Cole and Lunau 2018; Grant 2018). Moreover, critics argue, by extending the abolitionist paradigm, such policies preserve anti-sex work stigma, which fosters the exploitation of those who work in pornography, prostitution, and commercial sexual performance by legitimizing their abuse and by deterring them from seeking aid (Cianciarulo 2006; Dewey and Germain 2014; Weitzer 2007, 2018).

According to Anthropologist Denise Brennan, by stretching “anti-trafficking campaigns far beyond the goal of ending forced sexual labor” anti-prostitution activists have transformed the fight-against trafficking into a campaign to “eliminate all forms of commercial sexual transactions,” aiding and abetting “anti-prostitution and anti-migrant policies [that] have thwarted, contradicted, and undone the effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts,” (Brennan 2015, 607). All of which has led many critical anti-trafficking scholars to advocate for policies that fully “decriminalize” consensual adult sex work in order to reduce stigma associated with sex work and expand sex workers’ access to the full range legal, healthcare, and social services (for example see Bell 1994; Amnesty 2014, 2016; Gülçür and İlkaracan 2001; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; van der Meulen 2013). Such proposals are supported by evidence from studies in New Zealand where sex work was decriminalized in 2003 (Abel *et al* 2009; Gregoire 2017).

Despite more than fifteen years of evidence from New Zealand which indicates that the decriminalization of consensual adult sex work effectively reduced the frequency of criminal sex trafficking, many doubt the potential efficacy of this approach for the U.S. setting.

Policy disagreements notwithstanding, experts broadly call on policy makers to collaborate with individuals who are directly affected by human trafficking laws. Government advisors argue that anti-trafficking programs should include human trafficking victims as expert consultants in the policy making process (ACHT 2016, 2017, 2018; DOS 2017; GSI 2018, 2019). Sex workers and their advocates assert that they should be included as equal participants in research whose findings contribute to policies that directly impact their safety and livelihood (Bell 1987; Dziuban and Stevenson 2015; Graça *et al* 2018; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; Wolf 2014). Qualitative case studies of anti-trafficking intervention demonstrate that peer-to-peer outreach and survivor leadership effectively reduces human trafficking by expanding access to services, increasing participation in recovery programs, and by decreasing attrition rates in such programs (Brennan 2015, 608; Lloyd 2008; Musto 2008). This project builds on this scholarship.

Despite my primary desire to understand how women use religion to empower, heal, and reconcile themselves to one another, my research raised questions that are directly relevant to highly contentious political debates. This study's central claims highlight the influence of religion in government, historical racism and structural discrimination, and the hypocrisy of political regimes that publicly condemn sex trafficking while condoning labor exploitation. All of which represent urgent public conversations. At the same time, however, I recognize the potential ways in which my analysis might fuel troubling narratives. In particular, this project should not be understood to legitimate those who question the veracity of sexual assault claims, nor read in a way that dismisses human trafficking as mere 'moral panic.' Rather, this project tells the story of countless Christian activists whose personal faith compels them to intervene in the lives of vulnerable individuals, including in ways that challenge secular humanistic values

but that were, nonetheless, often welcomed by the individuals who were objects of said intervention.

This project also raises questions about the scope of human trafficking as well as the most effective approach to reduce human trafficking crimes. This project does not advocate for a particular policy solution. However, it does share the concerns of scholars about current anti-trafficking regimes. This project, which follows those who seek to intervene in the lives of sex workers as well as sex trafficking victims is less interested in the relative power that sex workers experience (vis-a-vis their clients) as much as it is interested in the way that they engage with interveners.

This project explores the personal accounts of individuals who have experienced systematic sexual abuse and exploitation and who now occupy leadership roles in the anti-human trafficking activist movement. Many of the figures who appear on these pages (especially those who appear in Part Two) have already published their accounts in autobiographical texts: *Dancing for the Devil* (Donnewald and Cecil 2014), *The Slave Across the Street* (Flores and Wells 2010), *Out of the Darkness: a Survivor's Story* (Jay 2015), and *Ordeal: an Autobiography of Linda Lovelace* (Lovelace and McGrady 1980). Others tell their stories publicly in lectures and short-form writing in social media and blog posts. None need scholars to give them a “voice” or to tell their stories on their behalf. That is not the purpose of this work. Instead, this project conducts anthropological analysis of key figures and organizations that comprise the activist movement to end human trafficking. A movement which has been variously referred to as a “moral panic” (Rubin 2011b), a “moral crusade” (Weitzer 2007), or as a campaign for “social justice” (CNRA *N.d.*; Salvation Army *N.d.*) or “civil rights” (Mackinnon 1985).

In the case of public survivors of highly stigmatized trauma, ruptures with the publics who support them may be particularly jarring. Skeptics cast doubt on the truth of their claims. Moralists challenge the authenticity of their spiritual transformations. Professional experts question their mental health. This project analyzes some of these ruptures. Likewise, doing critical ethnography in the United States compounds such methodological anxieties. English-speaking activist communities in North America enjoy equal access to products of scholarly work. Such ethnographic subjects can speak back to those that write about them by challenging ethnographic characterizations holding experts accountable to produce information that can be used to address community-identified needs.

By engaging the experiences of trafficking survivor-leaders whose personal agency is not at question, my analysis seeks what anthropologists Denise Brennan and Elżbieta M. Goździak have described as the “Golden Middle” of anti-trafficking research and policy. According to Brennan and Goździak this approach involves “ex-captives telling their own stories [and also] taking an active leadership role in its direction, agenda-setting, and policy formulation,” (Brennan 2005:38). Not all trafficking victims are sex workers and not all sex workers are subjected to trafficking. However, as I outline the broader historical, cultural, and economic implications of the experiences of survivors who are attempting to lead domestic social reform, I take ethical cues from anthropologists who work specifically with sex workers and their allies and advocates. As such, “[my] goal is to delineate an ethical, multifaceted, and multilayered picture of sex worker's lives lived in specific contexts, and bring to afore their hopes, fears, struggles, successes, and failures,” (Dewey and Zheng 2013:35).

## Notes to Chapter 1

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<sup>1</sup> Reflecting on the methodological challenge of delineating the evangelical aggregate, Historian David Harrington Watt observes that “[w]riting a history of the evangelical aggregate seems to be a little like—though not exactly like, of course—writing a history of the people who are on L.L. Bean’s mailing list,” (Watt 1990:157). The scholarly challenge that Watt observes is compounded by divisive debates within Christian theology as well as in the public political arena. Labels such “Charismatic” and “Pentecostal,” though precise, refer to specific theological traditions that call to mind sometimes-painful historical rifts in the church. Likewise, the terms “fundamentalist,” “evangelical,” and “Christian conservative,” have been frequently used as shorthand for right-wing militancy. As totalizing generalizations, such terms have frequently been used in ways that alienate non-Christians, as well the individuals such terms are used describe. Lamenting media representations of the 1980s televangelist scandals, historian Spittler observes that “evangelical, fundamentalist, charismatic, and Pentecostal could be interchanged at will for stylistic variety,” (Spittler 1994:103).

<sup>2</sup> By advocating for a “literalistic” hermeneutics and the “infallible” and “inerrant” charter of the Bible as the “transcendent” and “revealed” word of God, James Moody rejected the influences of German higher criticism which historicized the Old Testament and conceived as Jesus as a “prophetic leader” or “inspiring teacher” but not as the literal incarnation of God on Earth (Carpenter 1997; Marsden 1991; Watt 1990).

## **PART 1. HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE**

## **CHAPTER II**

### **The Evangelical Fight Against Human Trafficking (Introduction to Part 1)**

Scholars have long observed parallels between contemporary anti-human trafficking movements and historical anti-prostitution campaigns. They have emphasized the important role that evangelical leaders have played in drafting and promoting United States anti-human trafficking laws since the late nineteenth century. Such scholarship broadly concludes that anti-trafficking laws that prioritize the commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls serve the evangelical political agenda because they extend traditional conservative religious ideas about gender and sexuality. Part I of the present manuscript builds on such scholarship in order to introduce new claims about what motivates evangelical interest in the movement to end human trafficking in the United States:

(1) The chapters in Part I link evangelical concern with sex trafficking to prior existing racial and financial anxieties, which are evident in white supremacist and free-market narratives that characterize sex trafficking as “slavery” and which advocate for the privatization of public services for trafficking victims by investing public resources in faith-based organizations.

(2) This analysis concludes that just as evangelicals spearheaded efforts to raise public concern about commercial sex trafficking, so too has the anti-trafficking movement reinvigorated American evangelicalism: by enabling evangelical leaders to position themselves as policy experts, by channeling public funding to faith-based organizations, and also by renewing the political activism of the evangelical base.

Chapter 3 introduces the evangelical anti-trafficking movement by presenting ethnographic evidence from a church-sponsored anti-trafficking program in Detroit, Michigan. This chapter considers the public speech of a celebrity anti-trafficking activist, analyzing how she links her personal experience as a white suburban victim of human trafficking to the experience of chattel slavery in the Antebellum South and the broader African American struggle to secure enfranchisement and civil rights. It then analyzes this rally in terms of the church's broader "anti-slavery" campaign, which promotes self-defense classes for suburban white women and girls as a form of anti-trafficking activism. This grounds an ensuing discussion about evangelical social justice paradigms. Raising questions about the goals of this Detroit-based evangelical anti-trafficking activist program, and specifically about which communities and which types of individuals this activism is intended to serve, raises questions about the scope of evangelical social justice more broadly.

Chapter 4 presents historical evidence to support the claims of Chapter 3. Specifically, Chapter 4 traces the historical development of white supremacist and free market rhetoric in the religious movement to fight against commercial sexual exploitation in the United States. It locates the origins of the evangelical anti-trafficking movement within the work of Salvation Army activists who leveraged abolitionist rhetoric and private charitable intervention to abolish legal prostitution in Great Britain in the nineteenth-century. Seeking to duplicate the successes of their British counterparts, Progressive Era anti-prostitution activists in the United States decried prostitution as 'white slavery,' inverting the conventionally understood racial dynamics of abolitionist discourse. In the post-Reconstruction United States, white women and girls were configured as victims of "slavery" vis-à-vis non-white "enslavers." This chapter demonstrates how this transformation was enabled by private charitable actors. Progressive Era capitalists



promoted white supremacist eugenic science and the fight against white slavery as twin causes of their privately sponsored public health interventions.

Having identified the historically emergent intersection of white supremacist and free-market anxieties within American anti-prostitution rhetoric broadly, Chapter 5 resumes its analysis of specifically evangelical Christian activism. To do so, it presents ethnographic analysis from a federally-funded anti-trafficking task force that is administered by the Salvation Army of Southeast Michigan. This ethnographic study grounds a broader discussion of the rise of the faith-based social service sector in the United States and the historical politicization of the evangelical public more broadly. This historical and policy analysis traces how this community has been mobilized around public debates about “religious liberty,” which were initially asserted to defend the white supremacist goals of post-war evangelical segregationist academies and eventually led to the enactment of federal ‘charitable choice’ policies at the turn of the last century. This analysis argues that the intersection of racial and free-market politics reflects a core feature of evangelicalism, which, in turn, motivates evangelical interest in anti-sex trafficking policies. Federal legislative records are analyzed in order to examine how federal anti-trafficking laws have been leveraged to increase the influence of national evangelical political leaders. Publicly available financial and tax data from federal grant programs and faith-based organizations are analyzed in order to examine how public service programs have been transferred to the private sector through direct grants to faith-based organizations to work with trafficking victims.

Before proceeding to that analysis, it is important to first define the nature and scope of the problem that anti-human trafficking laws seek to address.

## **Human Trafficking in the United States**

“Human Trafficking” broadly refers to the exploitation of individuals for financial profit or personal gain through means for force, fraud, or coercion. However, for the purposes of this project, human trafficking is defined based on the terms outlined in the United States Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. First passed as US Public Law No. 106-386, the TVPA was subsequently revised and reauthorized in 2003 (TVPRA), 2005 (TVPRA), and 2008 (“William Wilberforce” TVPRA), before being passed as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 2013. Most recently, the TVPA was revised, removed from VAWA, and reauthorized as the 2017 “Frederick Douglass Trafficking Protection Act” (2017 TVPA). Now commonly referred to as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the TVPA represents comprehensive domestic anti-human trafficking legislation that provides the basis for anti-human trafficking policies in the United States broadly. Specifically, the TVPA defines human trafficking as involving the forceful, fraudulent, or coercive inducement of either commercial sex acts (a.k.a. “sex trafficking”) or involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery (a.k.a. “labor trafficking”). This project is particularly interested in the former. Religiously motivated anti-human trafficking activism in the United States focuses primarily on curbing sex trafficking. As such, this study primarily focuses on policies, debates, and intervention programs that address commercial sexual exploitation and the sexual exploitation of minors.

The way in which the TVPA parses the definition of human trafficking has generated significant debate among scholars and activists. Likewise, there exists widespread disagreement about the total number of individuals that fit the criteria as victims of this crime. Conflicting answers to these questions has led to heated disagreements and vitriolic exchanges reminiscent

of the late twentieth century “feminist sex wars” (Bell 1987; Rubin 2011). Such debates are addressed throughout this manuscript. However, before proceeding to that analysis, I would like to first review points of consensus in the human trafficking literature. In doing so, I will also summarize the history of current US anti-human trafficking law.

Human trafficking entails the abuse of the human rights of others for criminal financial gain. Those who advocate for the civil and financial rights of sex workers, as well as those who seek to criminalize, abolish, or otherwise curtail sex work, share an interest in reducing the exploitation and abuse of individuals who are involved in the remunerative exchange of sexual services (Benoit *et al* 2001; Barton 2006, 2017; Holsopple 1998). Like human smuggling, human trafficking is a potentially high-profit endeavor for third parties that engage in it, as it represents a significant return on per-victim investment of resources (Bales 2018; ILO and Walk Free 2017; NHTL 2019; Weitzer and Ditmore 2010, 328; Zhang and Chin 2001). Researchers, advocates, and public officials also generally agree that the factors that make individuals vulnerable to human trafficking are the same ones that make them vulnerable to exploitation broadly: structural asymmetries related to poverty, race, gender, and education as well as discrimination, disability and geographic displacement (Dewey *et al* 2017; Farley 2013; Feingold 2005; McNeill 2012b; Reid 2018; Weitzer and Ditmore 2010, 328-330).

Initially, the TVPA was drafted in conjunction with, and in order to fulfill US treaty obligations under, the 2000 United Nations (UN) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Women and Children. Reported increases in sex trafficking in Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union and the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia renewed political interest in anti-trafficking legislation in the 1990s (DeStefano 2007 and Miller in Shapiro 2006). Many TVPA provisions are included as part of the United States Code on Foreign Relations and Intercourse

(Title 22). As comprehensive domestic legislation, the TVPA defined the crime of human trafficking, amended the federal criminal code, and provided funding for services for victims, including more than \$55 million for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who provide services to trafficking victims in FY 2018 (Sheldon 2011). The TVPA departed from previous federal anti-human trafficking laws. In contrast to the Mann Act of 1910, under the TVPA, interstate movement and transportation were no longer required element of human trafficking crimes. The TVPA also provides trafficking victims access to federally funded benefits similar to refugees (HHS ASPE 2009). Foreign nationals who are identified as trafficking victims by the United States may also pursue T-Visas, which provide victims and their immediate family members a pathway to permanent resident status.

The TVPA represents an increasingly vital source of revenue for state and non-governmental groups that provide services to vulnerable women in the United States. In its most recent iteration, the 2017 TVPA was passed through a series of bills that were signed into law in December 2018 and January 2019, amidst a partial shutdown of the United States federal government. This timing highlighted the degree to which the domestic non-profit service sector has become reliant on the funds the law authorizes. In 2013, the TVPA had been passed as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). In December 2018 the VAWA lapsed due to the inability of the United States Congress to pass a federal budget for FYI 2019. Likewise, funding for the Department of Justice (DOJ) was also affected. Thus, while the TVPA was subsequently repealed from VAWA (34 U.S.C. 20702) and re-authorized through a series of bills signed into law in December 2018 and January 2019, the stability of immediate future funding for TVPA programs was placed in question. Particularly vulnerable was funding for domestic violence shelters who do not receive funds for trafficking victim services, but who

nonetheless serve such individuals as part of the service program. VAWA authorizes funds for programs through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as well as the Department of Justice (DOJ). The TVPA victim services provisions are funded in part through the DOJ; specifically, through DOJ grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). HHS was fully funded in September 2018, and, thus, their programs remained unaffected, including the National Human Trafficking Hotline. The 2017 TVPA amendment reauthorized “grants for trafficking victims inside the United States” through FY2021 and included massive increase in budget allocation: from \$11 million annually (2014 to 2017) to \$77 million annually (2017 to 2021). However, during the shutdown, reports circulated that “the DOJ is unable to fulfill payment requests until a new budget for this year is passed,” (Prokop 2019). Initial reports indicated that domestic violence shelters anticipated possible closure due to lack funds (Jeltsen 2019). Organizations that receive funding through the DOJ’s Office of Violence Against Women (OVAW) faced similar challenges (Prokop 2019).

Federal anti-trafficking laws passed in 2018-2019 expanded anti-trafficking prevention efforts in ways that increase surveillance of human trafficking victims, as well as individuals who are perceived to be at risk of human trafficking. This includes funding human trafficking education in schools (S. 1312-3 Section 202), expanding victim screening programs (S. 1312-3 Sec. 303), and adding provisions for civil injunctions, which allow courts to take action “Whenever it shall appear that any person is engaged or is about to engage in” human trafficking or conspiracy to commit human trafficking (S. 1312 Section 107B; U.S.C. Chapter 77 Title 18 § 1595A). The most recently reauthorized form of the TVPA was passed shortly after SESTA-FOSTA legislation. The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 (SESTA) and its House equivalent the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA or H.R. 1865) revised the

Communications Decency Act (CDA), specifically of Section 230, which indemnified online publishers for user generated content on their platforms. Specifically, FOSTA-SESTA is retroactive legislation that holds website owners legally liable for criminal prosecution for any sex trafficking discussions that are viewable on their platforms, including among sex workers and their clients.

Despite the substantial federal investment to combat human trafficking crimes and to intervene on behalf of victims, there exists significant debate about the scope of human trafficking and the actual frequency with which it occurs. Since 2004, official estimates for the total number of trafficked persons worldwide has ranged from 800,000 to more than 40 million (Bales 2018; ILO and Walk Free 2017; McNeill 2012a; DOS 2004). Such estimates contrast with the actual number of trafficking cases reported by law enforcement. The Department of State estimates that the total number of human trafficking victims actually identified by law enforcement globally in 2018 was just over 100,409 and the total number of criminal prosecutions numbered fewer than 18,000 worldwide, yielding just over seven thousand convictions (DOS 2018, 43). Domestic data shows similar discrepancies.

Independent researchers estimate there exist as many four hundred thousand individuals are living in “slavery conditions” within the US at any one time (GSI 2018; GSI and Walk Free 2019). Yet from 2011-2015 FYI, only 8,314 cases of possible human trafficking were referred to US Attorneys, including by DHS, the DOJ, and state, county, and municipal authorities (BJS 2018). Of these, the federal government elected to prosecute fewer than 4,664, “insufficient evidence” being the primary reported reason to decline to pursue prosecution. Information provided by provided by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) suggests the that the total number of reported human trafficking victims identified

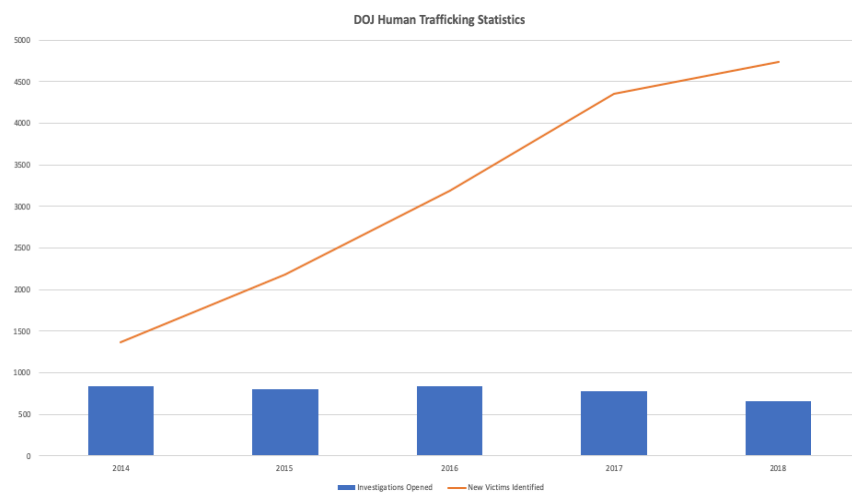
by state and local law enforcement annually was less than 1200 from 2015-2016 (*see* Figure 19, Appendix E). Agency reports further indicate that the total number of individuals arrested for committing human trafficking crimes in the US during this same period was less than 2000 (ICE 2017; DOJ 2012, 2019). The reported number of individuals receiving federally funded services earmarked for victims of human trafficking from 2016-2017 was 8,003 nationally, including just over 4,000 who were newly identified during that period (ACHT 2019).

Despite the prominence of human trafficking as a social issue, there exist disagreement about the factors that make individuals vulnerable to trafficking crimes. Political conflict, poverty, and government corruption have been identified as primary drivers of human trafficking internationally (Bales 2007). Research on childhood commercial sexual exploitation within the United States indicates that individuals are more likely to be at risk of human trafficking if they previously have had friends or family who are involved in the sale or purchase of sexual services, are members of ethnic minorities, and if they have a prior history of childhood sexual abuse or running away from home (Fedina *et al* 2016; Varma *et al* 2015). All of which suggest that the factors that make individuals vulnerable to human trafficking reflect the factors that make them vulnerable to exploitation more broadly: poverty, discrimination, and lack of adequate social supports. Yet, trafficking research sponsored by law enforcement agencies frequently reframes structural vulnerabilities as personal ones, attributable to victims' "family history," "romantic" longing, and lack of "self-esteem," and an individual's personal "perception of their own disadvantage" (for example see Bales and Lize 2005, 27, 152, 157; IOM 2009, 28-29; Richmond 2017; US DOJ 2017, 2 and 2015).

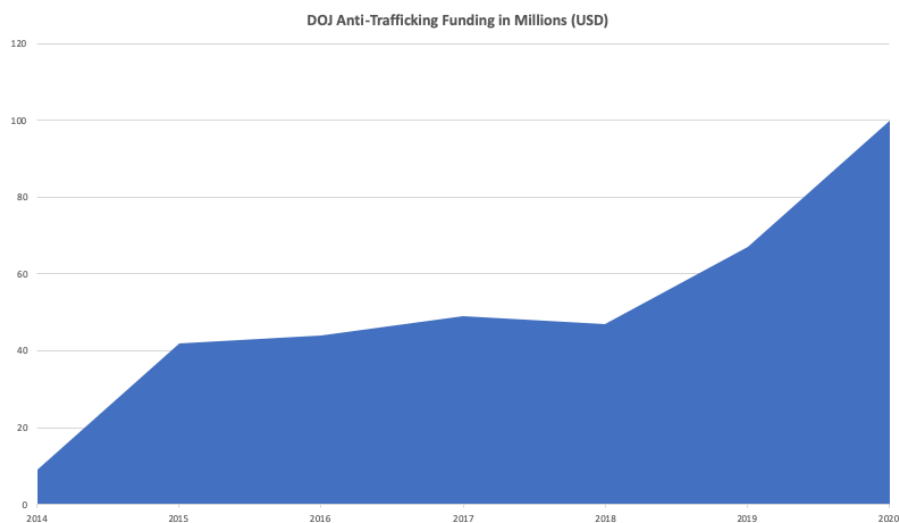
Government data about human trafficking raises questions about the efficacy of anti-human trafficking law-enforcement programs. The following illustrates trends in US Anti-

Trafficking Law Enforcement based on DOJ budget allocations, reported trafficking investigations, and reported victims identified from 2014 to present. Despite an overall decrease in human trafficking investigations pursued by the DOJ (835 in FY 2014 to 657 in FY 2018), the human trafficking victims identified through DOJ programs rose (from 1,366 in FY 2014 to 4,739 in FY 2018) (DOS 2015, 2016, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

**Figure 1. DOJ Human Trafficking Statistics: Investigations vs. Victims Identified (2014-18)**



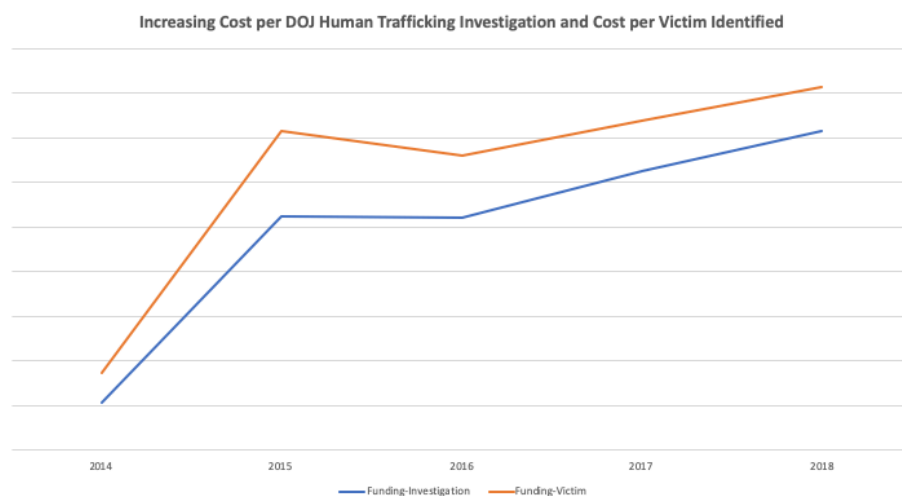
**Figure 2. DOJ Funding for Anti-Trafficking Activities in Million (2014-18)**





Yet, when compared to annual budget allocations for anti-trafficking activities at the DOJ, these trends reveal an overall decrease in the return on investment of DOJ funds. From 2014 to 2018, the DOJ increased its anti-trafficking budget allocation from \$9 million \$47 million (DOJ 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017; Motivans and Snyder 2018). This increase over time has coincided with a rising per-victim and per-investigation cost.

**Figure 3. Increasing Cost per DOJ Human Trafficking Investigation and Cost per Victim Identified (2014-18)**



Recently the DOJ announced a record \$100 million investment in “activities to combat human trafficking,” which is more than double the average allocation of previous years (DOJ 2019). Based on funding-to-arrest and funding-to-identification ratios from 2014 to present, this suggests that the DOJ should expect to open nearly 8,000 human trafficking investigations and to identify nearly 30,000 human trafficking victims next year alone. This seems extremely unlikely given that the DOJ opened only 657 investigations and identified fewer than 5,000 victims in

total in FY 2018. Analysis like this illustrates the asymmetry between the evidence about human trafficking and the rate at which resources are invested to combat it.

Likewise, there exist questions about the predominant form in which human trafficking occurs. According to the US Department of State and the United Nations, human trafficking most commonly occurs as sex trafficking, accounting for up to 79% of human trafficking arrests worldwide (DOS 2018; UNDOC *et al* 2009). Independent researchers estimate that the total annual revenue of the global “sex trafficking industry” ranges from \$9.5 billion to more than \$50 billion (Belser 2005; EAC 2016; Kara 2009). (If true, global sex trafficking revenues would be on par with the yearly revenue of the global music industry and the annual sales of global corporations such as 3M, Alibaba, American Express, Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, Goldman, and Pfizer Healthcare (Forbes 2019; McIntyre 2019).) Such estimates give the impression that human trafficking predominately involves commercial sexual exploitation.

However, other studies indicate that labor trafficking is far more prominent. The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports that the most common form of human trafficking is actually “forced labor,” including an estimated 16 million individuals currently subjected to private sector exploitation but only 4.8 million in forced sexual exploitation (ILO and Walk Free 2017). Likewise, government records reveal that 70-80% of foreign-born individuals issued continuances to stay on the US on the grounds of being victims of human trafficking, were identified as victims of non-sexual forms of forced and coerced labor (DOS 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019). Such divergences reflect differences in the way that human trafficking is defined in the TVPA, the UN Protocol, and international labor treaties as well as varying conceptual frameworks researchers employ. They also reflect structural biases in anti-human trafficking law and enforcement.

Despite divergent claims that coerced labor represents the predominate form of human trafficking, human trafficking arrests most frequently involve sex trafficking crimes. A 2012 National Institute of Justice (NIJ) report comparatively research analyzing cases of sex and labor trafficking in the US, noting that the latter were relatively more difficult for law enforcement to identify, classify, and prosecute (Farrell *et al* 2012). While labor trafficking investigations were more likely to be initiated based on a tip from persons with direct knowledge of the situation, such cases were investigated by law enforcement at fewer rates. And those investigations that were pursued resulted in lower arrests rates: 69% (labor) vs. 83% (sex).

Federal anti-trafficking and labor laws also establish asymmetrical criteria for evaluating sex trafficking crimes versus forced labor more broadly. In contrast the UN Trafficking Protocol, which groups commercial sexual exploitation under the broader category of human trafficking along with forced labor and slavery, the TVPA calls out “sex trafficking” as a specific crime in contrast to all other forms of forced labor, which are grouped broadly under the category of “labor trafficking,” which includes: “involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” (OTP 2005, 2012; OHCR 2000). Likewise, the US criminal code (Title 18) enhances the penalties for human trafficking crimes that involve a sexual component. While human trafficking offenses carry a maximum prison sentence of twenty years, when those crimes include acts of kidnapping, aggravated sexual abuse, or death (or an attempt to commit such acts), the maximum sentence is extended to life imprisonment (DOJ 2016). These asymmetries are also reflected in higher thresholds for evaluating instances of child labor. The United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention explains this distinction as follows; “One important difference between child labor trafficking and child sex trafficking is that force, fraud, and/or coercion is present in child labor trafficking; whereas any minor involved in a commercial sex

act with or without the use of force is considered a sex trafficking victim,” (DSG 2016, 1 emphasis added).

Victim advocates argue that sensationalist media coverage of sex trafficking cases reinforces the perception that human trafficking primarily involves the sexual exploitation of women and girls and shapes law enforcement funding priorities accordingly (Miller 2018). Studies of TVPA cases indicate that while suspected victims of sex trafficking are predominately young female US citizens, suspected victims of labor trafficking were more likely to be male, Hispanic, non-citizens (Farrell *et al* 2012, 59; Roe-Sepowitz *et al* 2018). Noting such discrepancies, US anti-trafficking officials as well as NGO victim advocacy groups have called for law enforcement to prioritize labor trafficking crimes (ACHT 2016, 2017, 2018; Miller 2018). In particular, independent researchers argue that in the United States, anti-immigration policies, inadequately regulated international supply chains, and widespread failures to enforce safe labor laws, increases coerced labor overseas, in factories where imported goods are produced, and also domestically, in the agricultural, hospitality, and domestic service sectors where exploitation abounds (Brennan 2014; Dias 2019; GSI 2019). Such criticisms cast further doubt on the reliability of human trafficking estimates.

Similar to research on crime statistics broadly, the black market nature of human trafficking gives rise to a preponderance of “false positives” as well as “false negatives,” which make it challenging to scale local trafficking numbers to generate broader statistical claims (Dank *et al* 2014; de Vries and Dettmeijer-Vermeulen 2015; Merry 2016; Tyldum and Brunovskis 2005; Weitzer 2015; Weitzer and Zhang 2014). Non-governmental scholars include in their estimates individuals that may or may not fit the legal criteria of human trafficking victims (for example see Bales 2018; Global Slavery Index 2018; Gallagher 2017)<sup>1</sup>. Likewise,

agencies that solicit crime tips from the general public publish statistics about the number of publicly reported incidences of human trafficking, which far exceed the number of individuals who are actually identified as victims of human trafficking crimes as a result of these reported tips (Blumenthal 2018; NHTL 2019; McNeill 2012; NCMEC No date).<sup>2</sup>

Methodological issues are exacerbated by the egregious nature of trafficking phenomena, which is frequently portrayed in graphic terms that are intended to elicit highly emotional responses. Public figures inflate and, in some cases, fabricate statistics in order to galvanize public support for anti-trafficking programs as well as various other political concerns (Bump 2018b; Davies 2009; Feingold 2010; Kessler 2015; Markon 2007; McNeill 2012; US GAO 2006; Weitzer 2005 and 2010b). Moral conservatives and anti-prostitution feminists conflate consensual and coerced forms of remunerative sex in order to justify calls for wide-scale campaigns, which prioritized the abolition of prostitution as the most effective means to reduce human trafficking (Berman 2005; Chuang 2010; Day 2009; Doezema 1998, 2001, 2010; Weitzer 2005, 2018; Weitzer and Ditmore 2010; Weitzer *et al* 2014). Public officials and activists further muddy the ideological waters by using the term “modern day slavery” to characterize human trafficking as an urgent moral concern and widespread human rights crisis that demands a swift and immediate response (Day 2009; Gagnon 2016; Irwin 1996; Murphy 2014, 2015).

The UN Trafficking Protocol and the TVPA distinguishes sex work and sex trafficking by emphasizing the non-consensual aspect of this crime. However, sexual labor and sexual exploitation are socially contingent phenomena, which must be understood in terms of prevailing cultural norms, religious customs, and historically specific ideas about who is capable of providing consent and on what terms (De Zalduondo 1991; Donovan and Barnes-Burs 2011; Lutnick 2016; Orchard 2011; Ramberg 2014; Weitzer *et al* 2014a; Vijayarasa 2016). This creates

problems for implementation. Law enforcement officers and intervention workers frequently fail to distinguish between independent sex workers, trafficking victims, and survivors of sexual assault (for example see Abdela 2007; Cianciarulo 2006; Clancey *et al* 2014; D’Adamo 2014; Doezema 2002; Saunders 2005; Weitzer 2010a). This calls into question the analytical utility of the concept of “the global sex trafficking industry” (van der Pijl *et al* 2011).

### **Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies**

Without disputing the fact that human trafficking occurs, persistent discrepancies between prevailing representations of human trafficking and ethnographic evidence has led many to describe human trafficking as a “moral panic” that has inspired a “moral crusade” (for example see Davies 2009; Gould 2010; Irwin 1996; Kempadoo 2005; Keo *et al* 2014; Weitzer 2007). Debates leading up the passage of the UN Protocol and the TVPA were dominated by a coalition of conservative Christian activists and anti-prostitution feminists (Berman 2005; Carnes 2000; Chapkis 2003; Chuang 2010; Doezema 2010; Mon 2006; McReynolds 2008). To establish common ground, Christian and feminist anti-trafficking activists reframed the fight against human trafficking as the fight against “modern day slavery.” In doing so, they renewed the ideological divisions and vitriolic tone that characterized the so-called ‘feminist sex wars’ of the 1980s (for example see Bracewell 2016; MacKinnon 1997; Rubin 2011).

Historically, feminist literature about remunerative sexual activity has largely focused on questions of power and agency. Such questions, and the scholarly divisions they engender, persist in contemporary feminist scholarship. This literature can be grouped broadly into two primary camps.

(1) Anti-prostitution feminist theory argues that the conditions of capitalist patriarchy limit women's ability to fully consent to sexual activity (Dworkin 1978, 16-17, 1981, 1983). This conceptual framework precludes the possibility that women can consensually participate in prostitution or pornography (Dworkin 1997, 141; MacKinnon and Dworkin 1997). Scholars who draw on this tradition argue that bodily harm and psychological trauma are inherent to the experience of participating in prostitution and the production of pornography (for example see Farley 2004a; Dworkin 1993; Mackinnon 1984, 1985, 1987; Schlafly 1987). A commitment to this stance rejects the distinction between sex "work" and sexual "exploitation," leading some feminist scholars to equivocate prostitution with rape and "slavery" (for example see Barry 1984, 1996; Farley 2003, 2004b).

(2) In contrast, others explore the agentic possibilities of remunerative sexuality. Such scholars have long criticized anti-prostitution feminist framework for reproducing heteronormative ideals, which alienate members of sexual subcultures and contributes to the further policing of sex and gender (for example see Butler 1993, 1999; Rubin 1984, 1993, 2011; Rubin and Butler 1994). Literature which theorizes the transgressive potential of sexual performance builds on this work. Ethnographic studies document the ways in which sex workers cultivate personal power through acts of personal expression as well as by sexual dominating their customers for financial profit (for example see Chapkis 1997; de las Kropiwnicki and Dewey 2011; Egan 2006a, 2006b; Frank 2002; McClintock 1992; Sanders 2005; Wood 2000). Similarly, other studies explore the potential for sex work to provide authentic intimate experiences for sex workers as well as their clients (for example see Bernstein 2007; Bernstein and Schaffner 2005; Ditmore *et al* 2010; Tovory and Poulin 2012).

Scholars also counter anti-prostitution feminist theory by asserting that sex work represents a legitimate form of labor. Ethnographic accounts demonstrate the ways in which sex work provides sex workers with opportunities for class mobility and financial independence (for example see Brennan 2009; Jeffrey and MacDonald 2006; Kempadoo 2001; McClintock 1992; Sanders and Hardy 2014). This body of scholarship also includes studies that document the complex and multifaceted challenges that individual sex workers face. Such studies approach sex work as a legitimate, albeit culturally constrained, financial option for those who participate in it (for example see Barton 2006, 2017; Benoit *et al* 2001; Blair 2010; Dewey 2011; Dewey and Germain 2014; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Holsopple 1998; Rosen and Venkatesh 2008).

The field of Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies emerges from the scholarly literature on sex work and labor. Scholars working in this field resist abolitionist paradigms, distinguishing sex work from sex trafficking while acknowledging the potential for labor exploitation in the commercial sex industry. However, the field is relatively less interested in extending feminist debates about consent and coercion than it is interested in problematizing a domain of public policy: anti-human trafficking legislation and state-sponsored anti-trafficking intervention programs.

Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies problematizes dominant discourses of human trafficking in order to advance the human rights of those who are impacted by anti-human trafficking reforms. As such, Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies combines scholarly analysis with advocacy. Specifically, this scholarship includes statistical, legal, historical and ethnographic analysis that pursues the following goals: 1) challenging prevailing estimates about the scope of human trafficking and the frequency with which it occurs; 2) exploring the similarities between contemporary anti-trafficking discourse and historical anti-prostitution campaigns; 3) reviewing



anti-trafficking funding and legislation in order to document the scope of public investment in anti-trafficking law enforcement and intervention efforts; 4) evaluating the efficacy of anti-trafficking policies; and 5) suggesting evidence-based reforms to reduce human trafficking and to protect the human rights of victims as well as individuals who are perceived to be at risk of exploitation.

Similar to reformers who sought to abolish state-regulated prostitution in the nineteenth century or who sought to eradicate “white slavery” during the Progressive Era, self-proclaimed “anti-modern day slavery campaigners” characterized sex work—whether consensual or coerced—as modern day “slavery” (Chuang 2010; Howard 2018; Murphy 2015; Viyejarasa 2016). Such rhetoric buttressed the claims of those who (continue to) argue that curtailing prostitution, by “ending demand” or through outright “abolition,” represent the most effective way to end sex trafficking and sexual exploitation (for example see Farley 2013, 2015a, 2015b; Shetty 2015). Critics countered that this ideological heritage and policy approach undermined feminist commitments to the human rights of all women, especially those who work in the sex industry. They counter that the most effective means for reducing the risk of sexual exploitation included expanding social services for women and reducing anti-sex work stigma, which, they argued, could be best achieved by decriminalizing prostitution (Bernstein 2007; Doezema 1999; Chuang 2010, 1701-1702).

In her review of anti-trafficking policy debates leading up the passage of the 2000 TVPA, legal scholar Janie Chuang argues that “[b]y refusing to mark the differences between rape and sex for money,” neo-abolitionism gives rise to “discursive and practical perils” including by contributing to the “maltreatment” of trafficking victims in courts, by “perpetuating stigma” against trafficking victims and sex workers alike, and by prioritizing the “prohibition and anti-

proliferation of the prostitution trade rather than the welfare and empowerment of prostitutes within the trade” (Chuang 2010, 1701-1702).

Modern slavery discourse links contemporary anti-human trafficking efforts to historical “anti-white slavery” campaigns in ways that resuscitate Progressive era race and gender ideologies as well as conservative moral sexual values (Doezema 1999; Kempadoo 2015a; Lammasniemi 2017; Siller 2016; Woods 2014). In particular, modern day slavery discourse nurtures iconic narratives of ideal victimhood that are prefaced on anxieties about the safety of white women and girls and which construe them as the appropriate recipients of anti-trafficking intervention and protection (see Chapter 4). In doing so it also obscures other types of victims (men, transgender individuals) and other types of human trafficking (labor). This reduces the overall efficacy of anti-human trafficking laws and programs and exacerbates public harm (Beutin 2017; Brennan 2015; Chapkis 2003; Haynes 2007; Srikantiah 2007; Uy 2011).

In her prolific work on the “new abolitionism” Sociologist Elizabeth Bernstein problematizes the unlikely alliance between North American religious actors, anti-prostitution feminists, and international law enforcement officials that represented one side of the debates over the United States TVPA and the UN Trafficking protocol (Bernstein 2007a, 2007b, 2010a, 2010b, 2012).

According to Bernstein, this alliance stems from a set of mutual ideological commitments to the idea that because those who are vulnerable to exploitation are first and foremost “victims,” the abolition of prostitution, and the elimination of the demand for it, are the appropriate end goals for anti-human trafficking campaigns. In turn, this ideological stance justifies the expansion of programs to monitor and police prostitution and the actors involved in it (especially sex workers themselves) on the grounds that doing so is most effective means for reducing exploitation.

Bernstein describes this network of personal relationships, institutional alliances, surveillance

practices, and abolitionist rhetoric as the “carceral feminist framework” (Bernstein 2012, 2010).

Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies calls attention to counterproductive aspects of anti-trafficking policies. The George W. Bush administration (2000-2008) conspicuously adopted modern day slavery rhetoric (Bush 2004). Subsequent revisions to the TVPA (2003, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2019) introduced a variety of new policies and restrictions that extended the abolitionist agenda. Included in the 2003 re-authorization of the TVPA was the "anti-prostitution pledge," which required foreign NGOs that receive federal anti-trafficking and anti-HIV/AIDS funding to publicly state their explicit opposition to legalized prostitution as a pre-condition of receiving aid. Specifically, it required such groups to adopt an organization-wide policy not to “promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution,” including in countries where prostitution is legal (Crago 2003). From 2005 until 2013 the terms of the pledge were expanded to include domestic NGOs, when it was reversed on first amendment grounds (SCOTUS 2013). This requirement has been widely criticized as counterproductive by public health workers who claim that it undermines harm reduction programs,<sup>3</sup> exacerbates obstacles to building trust with sex workers, and contravenes evidence that links the criminalization of prostitution to increased rates of HIV transmission (Amnesty 2016a, 2016b; Masenior and Beyrer 2007).

Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies also responds to calls from an expanding community scholar advocates who document human rights abuses that occur under the guise of abolitionist anti-trafficking intervention. Scholars argue that conservative politicians in the US have leveraged international financial aid for anti-trafficking programs abroad in order to defund reproductive healthcare, reduce access to HIV/AIDS prevention services, and to abolish prostitution, including in countries where it is legal (Ahmed 2011; Ahmed and Seshu 2012;

Bewley 2014; Crago 2003; DeStefano 2007; Soderlund 2005; Zimmerman 2010). Outside of the United States, anti-trafficking law enforcement programs, which adhere to the “raid and rescue” paradigm, entail the dramatic physical removal of individuals from brothels, whether or not police have identified the presence of third-party traffickers (Chuang 2010; D’Adamo 2014; Surtees 2003; Lerum *et al* 2012; Soderlund 2005). Likewise, such programs incentivize the detention of such individuals in facilities that retrain women for factory work and service jobs in the private sector at much lower wages (Agustin 2007; Block 2004; Doezema 2010; Soderlund 2005; Weitzer 2007).

The present study contributes to the field of Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies by presenting a case study of one a direct intervention campaign: the evangelical Christian anti-human trafficking movement in Michigan.

Despite existing scholarship on religiously motivated anti-trafficking efforts at the international level (for example see Agustin 2007a, Bernstein 2007b, Soderland 2005, Waiter 2010), thus far there has been a noticeable gap in ethnographic evidence about how such reforms play out on the ground in specific instances of intervention, especially within the United States. Such work has primarily focused on the experiences of individuals who are the targets of state-sponsored anti-trafficking intervention outside of the United States, frequently by analyzing research among sex workers or trafficking victims. In contrast, the present study focuses on the experiences of interveners; individuals who participate in religiously motivated intervention programs.

Existing scholarship on conservative religious actors in the anti-human trafficking movement has largely relied on historical accounts, failing to distinguish the goals of contemporary actors from those that drove Progressive Era reformers: the abolition of

prostitution as an extension of a morally conservative sexual agenda. In contrast, the present study examines the racial and economic ideologies that motivate the evangelical human trafficking movement. Looking specifically at the domestic context, this study analyzes the intersection of evangelical abolitionist rhetoric, which co-opts civil rights discourse to argue for the protection of women and girls of European descent, and political appeals to “religious liberty,” which are used to justify the redirection of public resources to the private sector. In doing so, it suggests that the fight against human trafficking has been central to the revitalization of the evangelical body politic in the twenty-first century.

## Notes to Chapter 2

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<sup>1</sup> The Global Slavery Index estimates that there exist more than 400,000 victims in the United States, they include individuals living in situations that would not fit the legal criteria of human trafficking, such as state-imposed forced labor, forced marriage (Global Slavery Index 2018; Gallagher 2017).

<sup>2</sup> The National Human Trafficking Hotline, which publishes statistics of its reporting and investigative activities, indicates that of the 222,0020 incidences of potential trafficking reported since 2007, fewer than sixty-thousand victims displayed “high level of indicators of human trafficking” (NHTL 2019). Similarly, in 2108 alone, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received more than 18.4 million reports, which primarily related to child sex trafficking, child pornography, and child sexual abuse. In contrast, U.S. law enforcement has identified only 17,900 child victims total since 2002 through these NCMEC reports (NCMEC No date).

<sup>3</sup> Harm Reduction is an approach to therapeutic intervention that seeks to ameliorate, rather than eliminate, “high-risk” behaviors, especially intravenous drug use and sex work. Although methadone was administered to IV drug users as early as the 1920s and the first public needle exchange program was founded in Amsterdam in 1983 (Jarlais 2006), the contemporary harm reduction philosophy is thought to have originated in the mid-1980s in and around the city of Liverpool, England. In contrast to the “abstinence only” paradigm that Reagan administration championed at the time, public health officials in the English Merseyside region responded to the influx of heroin and the concurrent rise of the AIDS epidemic by educating users about the risks associated with needle sharing and by offering users tools they could use to reduce those risks in their lives, including a clean needle program in 1985. The Liverpool model emphasized accessibility and respect for users. It was also highly controversial. While harm reduction programs, and the philosophy of care they represent, are now widely accepted as the norm in the contemporary public health community, significant moral opposition exists (MacCoun 2012; Springer 2003). Indeed, the United States banned federal funding for needle exchange programs from 1989 to 2016, despite a temporary respite for anti-AIDS initiatives in 2009-10 (Barr 2011; Levorio 2016; Masenior and Beyrer 2007; Office of Management and Budget 2009; Weinmeyer 2016).

## CHAPTER III

### **Theresa Flores is a Slave Unshackled**

Standing on a temporary stage in a brightly lit warehouse on the outskirts of Detroit, Michigan, Theresa Flores addressed the crowd at a church-sponsored anti-human trafficking rally: “I still know where my traffickers live!” As Flores spoke, she inhaled deeply after each sentence, punctuating her opening remarks with a series of dramatic pauses: “The men that did this to me still live here! ... They are still free! ... ” In response, members of the audience cried out in what appeared to be a collective expression of shock and disgust.

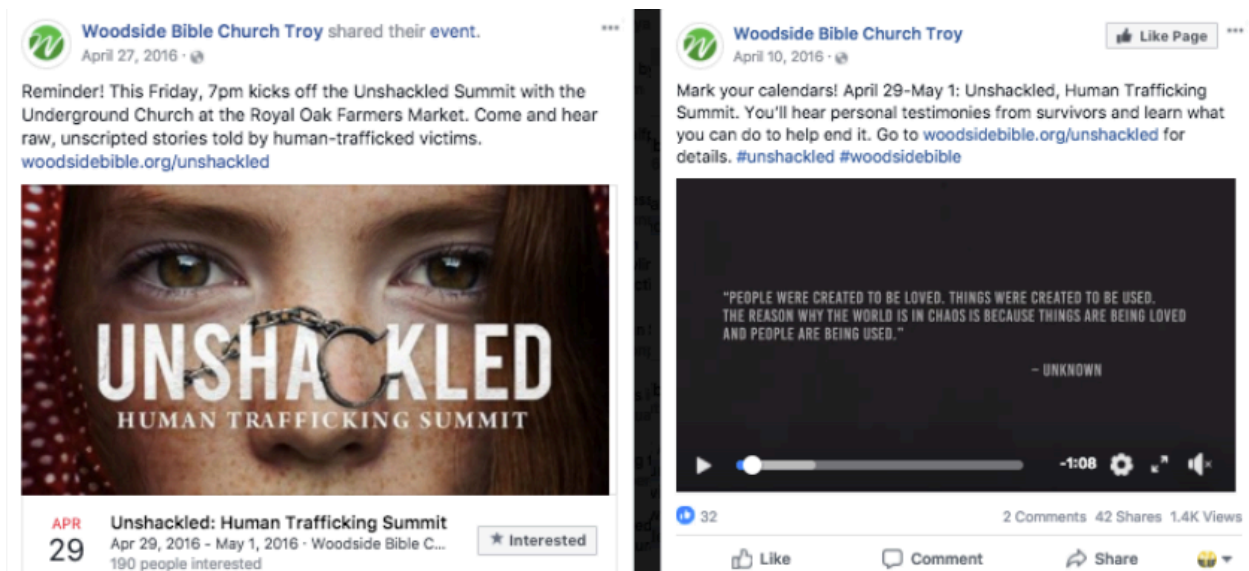
Flores spoke on the opening night of the 2016 Unshackled Human Trafficking Summit. Sponsored by the Detroit Woodside Bible Church, the multi-day event had been promoted on social media as and “interdenominational social justice gathering” where the “public” could learn to hear “raw, unscripted stories told by human-trafficked victims.” Christian activists like Flores who integrated dramatic narratives of sexual exploitation with a description of the leadership work they now do. Their testimonial talks synthesized biblical references and civil rights themes and were interspersed with prayer, worship and live music played by Woodside’s worship band. Pointing northward towards Detroit’s affluent suburbs, Flores warned us: “It happened just five miles up. Think about that!” She paused. Those seated in my row gasped audibly, recoiling at her claim; a group of upper-middle class men had preyed upon their white teenage neighbor and continued to live freely among them. However, as I scanned the crowd it was unclear to me if the collective inhalation represented a spontaneous reaction to new information or a reflexive response to a punctuated moment in already familiar narrative. Flores is a widely known author

and activist who regularly speaks publicly about her past experience to promote anti-trafficking legislation in Michigan and Ohio and to recruit donors and volunteers for the group she leads: Save Our Adolescent from Prostitution (SOAP). I recognized many of those seated near me from other church events where Flores spoke previously.

“It took me a long time,” Flores confessed, “I was scared. But finally, God called me back to Michigan to fight against slavery!”

Enthusiastic clapping and whistles filled the hall as more than three hundred evangelical congregants and would-be activists applauded Flores’ call-to-arms with a partial standing ovation.

**Figure 4. Woodside Bible Church Troy: Unshackled Facebook Advertisements (Feb. 2018)**



## Chapter Summary

This chapter examines the narrative work performed by Theresa Flores; a prominent figure in the anti-human trafficking movement in Michigan who is also a self-described survivor of “modern day slavery.” It does so in order to problematize evangelical use of the term “slavery” to describe human trafficking. The analysis that follows builds on previous discussions about the historical origins of modern-day slavery discourse. It also introduces new ones. Specifically, this chapter attends to the theological significance of slavery rhetoric as an activist pedagogy, which configures the evangelical public, trafficking victims, and the relationships between them through interactions that involve survivor leaders and their publics; for example, Theresa Flores’ talk at the Detroit Unshackled Human Trafficking Summit. Questions about the purview of evangelical social justice discourse are re-visited in section two of this dissertation, which focuses on evangelical outreach; face-to-face interactions between evangelicals and trafficking victims.

Within the evangelical anti-trafficking movement, use of the term “modern day slavery” calls to mind a centuries-long narrative of Christian social engagement. In the eighteenth century, church leaders prominently advocated for the emancipation of enslaved Africans and called for the abolition of the American chattel slavery system (Choi-Fitzpatrick 2014; Stewart *et al* 1996). However, scholars studying contemporary Christian abolitionist discourse have noted the “whitewashing” of the anti-human trafficking movement, which displaces the suffering of African Americans who were enslaved and their descendants (Buter 2015; Doezema 1999; Maynard 2015; Woods 2013). This chapter tracks the historical development of this discursive transformation. It also presents new ethnographic evidence to illustrate the mechanism by which this displacement occurs. White survivor leaders like Theresa Flores that adopt the terminology of slavery in their firsthand narratives, reconfigure the racial dynamics of African American



suffering in order to explicitly identify middle class American women and girls of European descent as the inheritors of historical legacies of trauma. The discussion that follows examines how this configuration emerges in narrative. It also examines the extent to which it is taken up by the evangelical public.

This chapter begins by presenting a segment of ethnographic interaction in which Theresa Flores frames her personal experience explicitly as an extension of black chattel slavery and the struggle for Civil Rights. Flores presents her narrative in the context of a call and response interaction-framework. As such, this ethnographic segment provides an opportunity to analyze public uptake of modern-day slavery discourse in real time. Following a brief overview of the call and response interaction framework, I focus specifically on a breakdown in that frame of interaction in order to highlight the “face work” (Brown and Levinson 1978; Goffman 1967; Yang and Kleinman 2008) that survivor leaders and their publics do. By approaching this frame break as a paradigmatic crisis that manifests as a metadiscursive one, this analysis provides the springboard for opening up broader questions about race, social justice, and the web of relationships that underly the survivor leader phenomenon.

This chapter argues that evangelical anxieties about sexuality (in particular the sexual integrity of women and girls) dovetail with US laws, which elevate trafficking crimes that involve a sexual component as being particularly egregious form of exploitation, in contrast to the multiple other forms of coerced labor or bodily harms that victims might suffer. In this context, modern day slavery discourse dis-embeds “slavery” from historical contexts and structural conditions. In this way, “slavery” becomes a free-floating signifier, which survivor leaders (and their publics) can attach to certain types of individuals who have experienced certain

types of traumas, especially sexual ones. In turn, this discursive reconfiguration of slavery engenders a series of paradoxes, which survivor leaders resolve.

Survivor leaders like Theresa Flores resolve “double binds” (Bateson 1972) that emerge from the rhetorical and pedagogical practices of the anti-human trafficking movement. Human trafficking is often asserted as a widespread but largely invisible phenomenon. In this context, doubts about the veracity of a particular survivor’s claims are reconfigured as incredulity: absence becomes evidence that human trafficking has occurred. In addition, social justice oriented evangelical Christians must balance theological mandates that they do missionary outreach in urban settings, with racial and sexual anxieties that make them unable or unwilling to do so, such as in the case of sex trafficking victims in the predominately African American city of Detroit. Evangelical Christian conventions of testimonial witnessing provide a platform for survivors to publicly disclose firsthand accounts of human trafficking. However, the evangelical’s public desire for graphic depictions of sexual violence contravenes evangelical prescriptions against pornography and for sexual purity. Figures like Theresa Flores, who instructs her audience to monitor their own children as the most effective means for combating the social problem of human trafficking, offer themselves up as representative victims. Following Rene Girard’s (1977) definition of the “surrogate victim,” which is central to his theorization “mimetic desire,” the present analysis argues that Flores resolves these double binds and diffuses multiple racial-sexual anxieties by functioning as sacrificial victim for her audience’s children who, in turn, represent surrogate victims for the descendants of black slaves: socially and economically marginal African American communities in and around the segregated city of Detroit, Michigan.

## **The Discursive Limits of Modern Day Slavery**

Theresa Flores is a widely celebrated figure in the Michigan anti-trafficking movement and beyond. A licensed social worker and sex trafficking survivor, Flores leverages her professional credentials and personal story to raise public awareness about human trafficking, advocate for the passage anti-human trafficking laws, and to promote her non-profit organization: Save our Adolescents from Prostitution (SOAP). Flores' activism has earned her recognition from state and private industry. Most notably, Flores received the Ohio Governor's Courage Award in 2012 and, in 2017, she was a top-ten national nominee for L'Oréal Paris' annual Women of Worth Award. Flore's 'girl next door' personae is central to her message that 'anyone' can become a victim of human trafficking. A Midwest-born Catholic and former stay-at-home mom who married into a Latino immigrant family, Flores possesses a personal profile that resonates with a wide US demographic.

Theresa Flores was one of three survivor leaders who spoke on the opening night of the Unshackled Human Trafficking Summit in Detroit, Michigan. Despite the inspirational atmosphere, the event's gruesome themes contrasted with the venue's celebratory decor. Backed by an upbeat Christian worship band, speakers stood under a ceiling festooned with twinkling white and purple lights as they relayed graphic firsthand accounts of addiction, gender-based violence, child sex trafficking, police corruption, and the cycle of poverty, homelessness, and street-based sex work in Detroit. All of which surreally reinforced popular narratives that equate sex trafficking with "modern day slavery" and violent poverty with the city itself. Woodside's decision to open the summit on the outskirts of the city and with a message from its young Detroit-based pastor, underscored the church's social justice-themed marketing for the Unshackled event.

Woodside is a regional evangelical megachurch that coordinates fourteen “campuses” throughout the Detroit metro area. With seven to nine thousand weekly congregants attending weekly services throughout Southeast Michigan, Woodside continues to be one of the largest churches in the state (Hartford Institute for Religion Research Nd; Thieda 2015). Based on crowd counts, at least three hundred individuals attended the Friday night opener, which took place in the aging industrial hall that doubled as a weekend meeting place for one of Woodside’s diverse satellite congregation that met on Friday nights in the city. But judging from their majority white faces, it appeared that many in the audience that night had driven in from Woodside’s suburban hub. Anthropologists of Christianity have noted that North American evangelicals are increasingly turning to social outreach in urban settings in an effort to pursue what they understand to be more “authentic” spiritual experiences (Bielo 2011; Elisha 2008 and 2011). The issue of sex trafficking motivates this demographic in particular because it merges religious concerns about gender and sexuality with biblical themes of exodus and salvation. Figures like Theresa Flores personalize the issue by emphasizing the vulnerability of white middle-class American women and girls. Based on the standing ovation she received at the Unshackled Summit, Flores’ use of the term “slavery” to describe her own experience as a white suburban trafficking victim resonated with her evangelical audience.

As Flores spoke, her well placed dramatic pauses and periodically breaking voice effected the tone of a spontaneous confession consistent with Woodside’s description of the event as a chance to “hear raw, unscripted stories told by human trafficked victims.” However, her tone belied the well-rehearsed nature of her narrative, which Flores has shared publicly since at least 2006 (c.f. Podolak 2013). In her autobiographical books (Flores 2007 and Flores 2010), film (Nagy-Picco 2012), public lectures (c.f. TEDx and Flores 2011), and multiple interviews in

local and national media (c.f. Creel 2018; Ivanhoe 2007; Morales 2009; Robertson 2014), Flores explains that from 1980 to 1982 she participated in high school, church, and extracurricular activities while living with her middle class Catholic family in Birmingham, an affluent suburb ten miles north of Detroit. However, most nights she was subjected to an ongoing blackmail scenario orchestrated by a classmate's cousins. During a seemingly innocent visit to the family home of her school crush, Flores was drugged, raped, and photographed. Over the next two years the young men used these compromising photos as leverage to make Flores leave her family under cover of darkness and subject herself to violent sexual acts before they returned her home each morning. According to Flores, all of this occurred unbeknownst to her parents, siblings, teachers, coaches, and priests.

Flores' testimonial narrative culminates with her nadir when she was gang raped in a squalid Detroit motel. Stripped naked before nearly twenty men, sixteen-year-old Flores was drugged and repeatedly auctioned to the "highest bidder." Her only refuge were intermittent bathroom breaks during which she savored the ablution of a single bar of generic white soap which she emphasized had been hygienically wrapped to preserve its purity among the squalor. Having expended her economic benefit by morning, Flores says she was left for dead. She emerged from the room dazed, barefoot, and alone in the unfamiliar landscape of nighttime Detroit before stumbling into an all-night diner where an unquestioning waitress came to her aid. Flores ascribed this encounter to divine providence; since none of the adults in her life had hitherto noticed her worsening state, the "only possible explanation," she claims, was that this "stranger" had been "sent by God." As she told the Unshackled audience: "I truly believe that waitress was an Angel in human form."

Eventually, a police officer returned her to her unquestioning parents whose cool reception confirmed her worst fears. According to Flores, “They assumed I was just out ‘whoring around’.” Shortly thereafter, Flores’ father was promoted, and his company abruptly moved the family to a remote beachside house on the Atlantic ocean, placing her beyond the reach of her former captors and relieving her of the burden of confessing her secret to friends and family. Flores explains that though she initially attempted to disclose the abuse to a rape crisis counselor in college, she only first fully shared her story more than twenty years later, after attending a conference on human trafficking in her capacity as a social worker.

Having completed a master’s degree in Counseling and Education in Ohio, in 2007 Flores published her first autobiography: “The Sacred Bath: an American Teen’s Story of Modern Day Slavery.” She then embarked on a regional speaking tour during which an epiphanic drive on a Michigan highway returned her to the site of her abuse. In that moment, Flores said, “God told me what I had to do to help other girls like me.” In a fatidic instant, Flores established her own anti-trafficking humanitarian organization: Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution (SOAP). Inspired by the horrific scene in the Detroit motel, SOAP’s signature intervention involves wrapping bars of soap with labels that list the national trafficking hotline phone number. Volunteers then distribute the soap to hotels and motels known to—or believed to be—sites of prostitution, especially in Detroit. As Flores told crowd at the Unshackled Summit: “Finally, God called me back to Michigan to fight against slavery!”

As the crowd applauded, Flores smiled and pumped her fist repeatedly in a triumphant gesture, allowing the cacophony to dissipate before she continued. “You know,” she reflected, “You think back to the time of slavery. And we had slaves in Alabama. They were working on the field and they were working in the master’s house.”

Flores close her eyes and inhaled audibly. Two women sitting next to me did the same.

Opening her eyes, Flores asked us: “Were they shackled? Were they chained to the field and to the house? No! The question people always ask me is ‘Theresa, Why didn't you leave?’ But we don’t ask that question of the slaves, do we? Why didn’t slaves leave, walk away? Because we know, and on this we are in agreement, we know that there was an emotional shackle but not a physical one.”

Flores paused. Her momentary silence anticipated another audience response. But the previously boisterous crowd sat stoically. The call and response cue had failed.

“Does everybody agree with that?” She prodded smiling, “Yes?”

As the audience shifted quietly in their folding chairs, Flores’ previously magnanimous expression dissolved. Finally, Flores broke the frame. Taking on the role of shill, she admonished us: “Wake up? Yes?”

Failing to elicit the desired effect, Flores changed tactics. Stepping away from her position in the middle of the stage, Flores placed her hand to her ear, leaned out into the hall, and sang out: “I can’t hear you!”

Flores held her precarious position on the edge of the stage. Eventually isolated pockets of applause resolved the uncomfortable silence. At which Flores stepped back, nodded in satisfaction and continued.

“You know what the real problem is? Apathy! In the 1960s they protested by chaining themselves to demand freedom. But now we say: ‘Oh, that’s not my problem; I’ll let the next person take care of it’.”

Flores paused. The woman on my left leaned in and whispered: “She’s right, you know.” Others nearby nodded their heads in agreement.

Flores continued: “When you are leaving the movie theater late at night and you see a young girl waiting who is inappropriately dressed, do you stop and ask her, ‘Can I help you? Can I give you a ride?’ No, you don’t! Because God forbid she actually says ‘yes,’!”

Loud shouts of “Amen!” echoed from the warehouse’s high windowed walls; speaker and audience were once again aligned.

Flores increased her volume and speed. “You know what the real problem is? The breakdown of the family! We’ve let immorality into our homes. We are so busy, so disconnected, we don’t know what our children are doing right upstairs or even if they are home at all!”

The crowd applauded enthusiastically, apparently moved by the invocation of familiar family values rhetoric.

Raising her voice above the din, Flores pointed a finger sternly into the hall and asked us: “How many of you get up in the middle of the night to make sure your children are still in bed? I do.”

Theresa Flores is a licensed social worker and anti-trafficking policy advocate who is educated in clinical understandings of trauma, the law surrounding human trafficking, and the feminist paradigms and religious ideologies that have been leveraged to enact those laws. Flores is also a non-profit leader who successfully consolidates financial resources and public support for SOAP’s mission to fight against “modern day slavery” by leveraging her autobiographical account. When Flores states that the “slaves in Alabama” were “chained” to the “field” and to “the master’s house” by “emotional bonds,” she is claiming that it was powerful psychological attachments, not legal structures or physical restraints, that bound Africans in chattel slavery in America for nearly three hundred years. Flores’ claim is personal; a hyperbolic response to the



question “Theresa, why didn’t you leave?” It is also a pedagogical one; Flores reconfigures the category of slavery in order to articulate a form of social justice activism that speaks to the concerns and anxieties of her evangelical Christian audience. In doing so, Flores follows modern day slavery discourse to its logical end. Likewise, the audience silence, which follows the claims that Flores made at the Unshackled Summit, suggests the limits of this discourse.

### **Calls and Responses**

Theresa Flores’ statements about chattel slavery precipitated an unexpected improvisational moment in an otherwise highly scripted narrative. Flores is a charismatic public figure who speaks widely about human trafficking. She is also licensed social worker whose dramatic personal narrative attests to the need for the professional advocacy work she does now. A dynamic public speaker, Flores projects an aura of spontaneity that belies the well-rehearsed nature of her narrative, which she has shared publicly since at least 2006.<sup>1</sup> When Flores appears on Christian news media and speaks to church groups, she establishes rapport with religious audiences by highlighting her Catholic background, her spiritual afflatus, and by employing rhetorical strategies that are familiar to Christian audiences. When Flores spoke at the Detroit Unshackled Summit, she alternated between sober reflection, doleful confession, and rebuke. She also invoked a conventional “call and response” interaction framework with which her audience enthusiastically complied.

Throughout her Unshackled talk, Flores’ repeatedly signaled to her audience through verbal and paralinguistic cues, prompting them to respond. Flores’ cues were conventional but stylized: verbal calls, strategic pauses, and bodily gestures. In response, her listeners contributed verbal and physical expressions of shock, sympathy, and affirmation: applause, nods of

agreement, whispered commentary, and loud shouts of “Amen!”. This interactional rhythm continued for more than ten minutes. In this context, the audience silence following Flores’ cues signaled a break in the frame of interaction, which merits further scrutiny.

Call and response is a presentational style in which the performer cues the audience to reply to the main action-in-progress without yielding the floor. As an event-framework for a particular sort of discursive interaction, call and response entails a series of reflexive speech acts which are bracketed by verbal or paralinguistic speaker cues and audience replies (Keyes 1984; Mitchell 1990; Daniel and Smitherman 1976; Wharry 2003). Speaker calls are conventional (participants must recognize them as such) and improvisational (understood to reflect the speaker’s personal style and ability to adjust the talk to numerous situational factors) (Keyes 1984; Mitchell 1990; Daniel and Smitherman 1976; Wharry 2003). Similarly, audience responses are limited to a narrow range of acceptable forms but are idealized as spontaneous expressions of emotion (Loeb 2014; Sale 1992).

In her study of transcripts from a Christian Bible Study meeting, Sociologist Laura Loeb identifies four categories of responses that are available to audience members in the call and response framework: continuing, agreeing, assessing, and confirming (Loeb 2014). Following Durkheim (1912, 2), Loeb approaches call and response practices in terms of their capacity to unify individuals into social groups; a set of interactional practices for managing the collective construction of shared interpretations from which a religious “community” may emerge (Loeb 514-5; 528-9). However, her typology of responses also builds on analysis which conceptualizes call and response as a method of social critique.

Call and response is a set of interactional practices in which the audience is invited to evaluate the quality of a performance-in-progress or to comment on a speaker’s claims as she

makes them (Atkinson 1984; Edwards and Seinkewicz 1991; Keyes 1984, 145; Sale 1992).

Listeners may challenge the semantic content or pragmatic form of a speaker's utterance in any number of ways that do not relinquish their co-participant status, such as responses that revise a speaker statements which are then available to for a speaker to take up or to ignore (Levever 1981; Loeb 2014:527).

Following Goffman (1974), Bauman (1975; 1986), and Mannheim (1986), call and response is thus a conventional form of stylistic verbal play which structures particular types of social interactions in accordance with an expressive tradition. In this interactional schema, speaker calls and audience responses are discursive signs which, following the distinction outlined by Silverstein (1993), serve both metapragmatic and metadiscursive functions. Calls and responses orient the speakers and the audiences to one another, to the talk-in-progress, and to other participants who are semantically referenced but who may or may not be co-present; for example, incorporeal entities (Coleman 2009, 420). Calls and responses also orient bracketed segments of talk to others in the same segment. They also orient the entirety of the action-in-progress to other instances of call and response interaction and, thus, reflect back on the framework itself and the oral traditions it implies.

Call and response has been widely conceived as a distinctly African American style of religious sermonizing and political speech making which emerged from the oral traditions of Africans who were enslaved in the Americas (Battle 2006; Costen 1993; Crawford 1995, 38; Daniel and Smitherman 1976; DuBois 1903; Pitts 1993; Sale 1992). However, the form is now widely entrenched in mainstream American political and religious discourse. Within the European Christian tradition, antiphonal liturgical practice emerged in the ancient and medieval Christian Church (Dyer 1989; McKinnon 1994; Nowacki 1995).

As a contemporary antiphonal religious practice, the call and response framework more closely resembles charismatic and Pentecostal worship rites of indigenous African and diasporic Christian communities (Clarke 2013; Kirsch 2002; Pipe 2014; Williams-Jones 1975). In the United States, call and response emerged from the confluence of Wesleyan (Methodist) and African American spiritual traditions in the 19th Century Holiness-Revival Movement in American South (Land 2003, 47-53). The structure was subsequently adapted in political discourse, especially during the mid-20th Century in the speech-making of Civil Rights activists such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Lischer 1997; Harrison and Harrison 2005[1993]). Members of contemporary religious and activist communities in the United States that practice call and response articulate this framework's emphasis on improvisation ("spontaneity") and interaction ("communal participation") as a form of emancipatory democratic resistance against restrictive authoritarian institutions (Pattillo-McCoy 1998; Rice 2009; Wheelock 1983).

In the ethnographic excerpt that appears at the onset of this chapter, the audience silence is experienced as a disruption to the speaking performance, which rarifies Flores' authority as an expert speaker and calls into question her role as a victim of slavery vis-a-vis other slaves. According to Erving Goffman (1981), any perceptible shift in the framing structure of a particular communicative event also entails a change in the way that the event's participants are oriented to one another and to themselves; "A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance," (Goffman 1981, 128). As such, what is at stake when the frame of interaction shifts is no less than a speaker's public image and "projected self" (Goffman 1981).

By the time Flores introduces the topic of chattel slavery call and response has already been well established as the interactional event framework. Moreover, Flores has explicitly primed her listeners to respond to her statement by implicating them through the use of the first-person-plural pronoun: “we know, and on this we are agreement, we know that there was an emotional shackle but not a physical one.” Flores’ subsequent pause signals to the audience that their response is expected at this time. By instead remaining silent, the audience temporarily suspends the call and response interaction. At this point, Flores momentarily steps out of her role as the principal speaker who is animating her self-authored narrative and takes up a parallel but distinct role as a commentator. By leaning out over the stage and issued repeatedly explicating prompting her audience (“Does everybody agree with that? Yes?” ... “I can’t hear you!”) Flores “provides a visible model for her audience of the kind of response” that she is seeking (Goffman 1990:146). She holds this position for an extended period. Only once the audience responds with positive vocal confirmation does she resume the previous action-in-progress. Specifically, she does this by stepping back to her previous position on the stage and resuming her talk. This momentary break in the interaction framework is striking on a number of levels. Equally striking is the discursive ground upon which Flores manages to reinitiate this framework; the family focused themes she engages in order to elicit audience confirmation following the break.

Flores’ initial statements about African slaves in Alabama dovetail with racist revisionist historical discourse. For this observer, they also reveal a troubling lack of self-awareness, especially given the context in which they were uttered: a “social justice” event in the majority black city of Detroit. The silence that follows Flores’ statements indicates that her audience was also discomforted in some way. That this shift is perceived by Flores as the audience’s failure to cooperate, indicates that she believed that her authority as an expert speaker was at risk.

Specifically, the Unshackled audience failed to affirm Flores' assertion that black Africans in the American South were enslaved by the same means that she was as a white suburban trafficking victim living at home with her family. While any attempt to definitively attribute explicit racial attitudes to the Unshackled audience would constitute mere conjecture, their silence indicates that they were unclear about the grounds on which Flores made this claim.

### **The Whitewashing of Modern Day Slavery**

Government officials, policy advocates, and humanitarian organizations have widely adopted the term “slavery” to describe the criminal phenomenon of human trafficking (for example see Bush 2004; Clinton 2012; International Labor Organization 2017; Polaris Project 2017; Obama 2012, 2016).<sup>2</sup> This term is euphemistic, intended to present human trafficking as a particularly viscous system of inhumanity, which merits urgent attention relative to other societal problems (Bunting and Quirk 2017, 8; Hua 2011, 98-99). It also reflects a commitment to historical abolitionists concerns, such as those articulated in previous “anti-white slavery” campaigns (see Introduction, current text). It also derives from law; “slavery” is identified as one of many forms of human trafficking in the 2000 United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which distinguishes among “peonage,” “involuntary servitude,” “debt bondage,” and “commercial sex trafficking,” (US DOJ 2015). In order to successfully advocate on behalf of trafficking victims and to prosecute trafficking crimes, legal advocates and law enforcement officials must frame human trafficking cases specifically in terms of the language presented in the relevant statutes framed by the TVPA. Despite this, the overarching ahistorical discourse of slavery prevails in United States law enforcement attitudes about human trafficking, wherein government anti-trafficking interventions are presented as extensions of Nineteenth-Century

laws that abolished chattel slavery and the fight against civil rights abuses (c.f. FBI 2015; Buter 2015).<sup>3</sup> Some non-governmental advocates have even advocated for the dropping of the term “human trafficking” altogether in favor of the term “slavery” (c.f. Soodalter 2014; UNDOC 2016)

Statistical and case study research demonstrate that human trafficking most frequently occurs under conditions of poverty, discrimination, and widespread disparities in access to education, healthcare, and social services as well as government corruption, military conflict, and multiple other forces that destabilize communities (c.f. Bales and Lize 2005, 20-21; OSCE 2003, UN 2014, 39-43; US DOJ 2017, 2-3, 17). Despite this, persistent use of the term slavery contributes to the perception that human trafficking is a morally exceptional and ahistorical phenomenon. Such a view obscures the historical conditions of slavery (Woods 2013). It also engenders a dearth of structural analysis about contemporary root causes of human trafficking.

Tryon Woods (2013) approaches modern day slavery rhetoric as a heuristic to argue for the inherent anti-blackness of the anti-human trafficking movement. Specifically he argues that use of the term slavery co-opts black suffering to serve the ontological needs of non-black audiences to both make human trafficking legible and to negate the suffering intrinsic to the black word; evoked in this way, slavery cloaks “the [anti-trafficking] movement with political saliency and emotional urgency, while obscuring the ongoing calculus of racial slavery’s afterlife, the sexual terror of enslavement and coloniality, and the conspicuous absence of both from the discourse on human trafficking,” (2013, 121). Wood’s analysis contributes to the anti-trafficking literature by examining an issue that has been frequently addressed but yet widely under-theorized. However, his conclusions determine race in such a way that does not account for ethnographic instances such as that which appears at the onset of this chapter.

While agreeing that modern day slavery discourse does “extend rather than amend” the violent race-based legacies of the Atlantic African slave trade (2013, 216), the present analysis leaves open the questions about the way race is determined in this discursive formation. By untethering slavery from structural conditions and historical contexts, modern day slavery discourse configures “slavery,” and its attendant legacies of suffering, as free-floating signifiers which are available for attachment to individuals, as well as categories of them. Namely, white women and girls who are offered as the surrogates for historical victims of slavery and their descendants.

By configuring sex trafficking as slavery, neo-abolitionist rhetoric contributes to a hierarchal perception in which ending prostitution is prioritized relative to other social problems related to the socioeconomic conditions of women. It also mediates the individuals and practices involved. Just as this rhetoric configures sex workers primarily as victims and elevates sex trafficking as an urgent ahistorical phenomenon, so too does it elevate anti-trafficking advocates as modern day freedom fighters whose appropriate focus should be “rescuing slaves” and punishing “slave traders.” In this discursive formation contemporary activists are presented “as the equivalents and/or descendants of earlier anti-slavery activists and campaigns” who should look to “anti-slavery campaigns as key sources of inspiration and instruction,” (Bunting and Quirk 2015, 40). Claims made by figures such as Theresa Flores extend this parallel by making explicit what is often otherwise unstated assumption. Namely, the claim that contemporary victims of sex trafficking represent the modern-day equivalents of previous generations of chattel slaves and that efforts to defend and protect such individuals represent a continuation of United States civil rights legacies.



Prevailing attitudes in United States law enforcement reinforce such views by presenting human trafficking crimes as constitutional violations, which infringe upon victims' unalienable rights to life and liberty (death and kidnapping), and as moral offenses, in which the sexual violation of women and children (aggravated sexual assault) are understood to be mores odious than multiple other bodily and psychological harms that trafficking victims might suffer. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the primary enforcer of domestic human trafficking laws, classifies the crime of human trafficking specifically as "a violation of federal civil rights" and explains that the "FBI is investigating these crimes as one of its top civil rights priorities to protect those who may be a victim of this crime," (FBI No date).

When speaking at the 2016 Unshackled Summit, Theresa Flores followed modern day slavery discourse to its ultimate logical conclusion. In doing so, she engaged the stated social justice goals of the Summit's organizers. She also called attention to an unsavory problematic at the core of much anti-trafficking rhetoric, which often goes un-flagged. That is, the erasure of race-based violence and discrimination from the historical struggle for enfranchisement in the United States and the co-option of African American civil rights discourse. When firsthand narratives like Flores' are coupled with neo-abolitionist claims, these claims are not merely hyperbolic. When Flores asserts equivalencies between African slaves and contemporary middle class American girls of European descent, she is making explicit an otherwise an unstated assumption. She is also positioning her personal struggle within a broader historical narrative of disenfranchisement and civil rights, a practice that harkens back to the historical origins of the contemporary survivor leader phenomenon which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 of the present text. Survivor leader narratives like Flores' coordinate multiple semiotic and paradigmatic process by which particular types of individuals are configured as representative of

the broader category of victim. Further, such narratives configure actions that protect, support, and promote these specific individuals as efforts that contribute to social justice more broadly. Analysis which problematizes these narratives in the context of the history of modern day slavery discourse reveals the way that ethical historical calls for social justice, an activist pedagogy that was initially prefaced on class and race-based concerns, are being deployed specifically to defend the rights of American women and girls of European descent on the grounds of human trafficking.

### **Paradigmatic Relations as Facework: Making the Unimaginable Legible**

The audience silence that followed Theresa Flores' statement about chattel slavery at the 2016 Detroit Unshackled Human Trafficking Summit contributed to a break in the call and response interaction framework, which temporarily reconfigured the relationship between Flores and her audience and their orientation to her firsthand testimonial account which constituted the main action-in-progress. This, in turn, raises questions about Flores' claims and the grounds upon which she made them. Questions about the reliability of statistical findings have engendered widespread debate about the scope of human trafficking and frequency with which it occurs (Kessler 2015; Laczko 2005, 2004; Musto 2009; Tyldum and Brunoviskis 2005; Weitzer 2007). In this context, first-person trauma narratives of trafficked individuals are frequently coupled with appeals to neoliberal ideals in order to cast these individuals as victims of modern day slavery and thus justify the need for legislation and allocate resources for anti-trafficking law enforcement and victim services programs (Bernstein 2012; Doezenia 2010). This is especially true in the case of domestic human trafficking within the United States.

Especially since 2005, but also going back to 1991, first-person narratives of human trafficking have proliferated in the form of autobiographical books, blog posts, news reports, and popular films including fictional accounts, which offer graphic representations of human trafficking victims and their rescuers, and feature-length documentaries that present expose style investigations of child prostitution systems narrated by well-known Hollywood actresses.<sup>4</sup> Similar to historically popular white slavery narratives, stories about the specific experiences of sex trafficking victims in the United States include recurrent motifs of sexual assault, graphic violence, trauma, and innocence lost which are self-reflexively framed as activist pedagogy, evoking shock and awe that underscores the existence of human trafficking phenomena as a widespread but invisible social threat. The proliferation and success of these representations speaks to the public appetite for flesh and blood examples of human trafficking (Bickford 2012; Murphy 2014 and 2015; Johnson *et al* 2015; Stiles 2018). They also reflect the authors' investment in making salient what they regard to be the largely hidden and illegible problem of human trafficking.

The discussion that follows tracks how the absence of evidence about human trafficking is reconfigured as public ignorance and callous indifference in order to prove one of neo-abolitionism's central claims; namely, that the invisibility of trafficking crimes and public indifference to them are the root causes of human trafficking. In this context, figures like Theresa Flores do the important pedagogical work of capturing public imagination, inciting repulsion, and instructing audiences about how they should appropriately interpret human trafficking in the context of their everyday lives. The narrative process of leveraging empathy in order to guide an audience from indifferent disbelief to motivated action around a particular social problem entails multiple paradigmatic processes that situate particular types of individuals in relation to

categories of threat and also to one another, including relating spokespersons to the groups they represent and potential activists to individuals in need for their aid. In the case of narratives of “modern day slavery” this process reorganizes conventional understandings of the Civil Rights movement and its historical legacies, both reconfiguring their racial dynamics and reframing them as primarily personal traumas that are experienced by individuals. The break in the call and response interaction framework that occurred at the Unshackled Summit thus represents a paradigmatic crisis that is manifested as a metadiscursive one.

When a speaker asserts claims about the personal experiences of others, they potentially encroach on what Goffman has referred to as the “territories of the self” (Goffman 1971, 28). In doing so, they place themselves at great social risk, potentially imperiling their social “face” (Goffman 1967). As the leader of a non-profit organization that relies on financial donations to support its outreach in the local Detroit area, Theresa Flores is particularly prone to this risk. Anthropologist working in other cultural contexts have demonstrated that face management is a practice with financial implications; loss of face threatens one’s ability to participate in economic systems of trade and gift exchange (Yang and Kleinman 2008). Likewise, Flores’ audience is similarly at risk. As recent political events remind us, the practice of questioning sexual assault survivors about their claims easily dovetails with widespread historical practices that devalue the perceptions of vulnerable populations, especially women and girls (Rodino-Colcino 2018). Such critical practices also raise doubts about the questioner’s commitment to social justice and their attitude towards vulnerable individuals in general. In this context, call and response practices offer a potential mitigating effect. Following Brown and Levinson (1978), responses that continue, agree, assess, or confirm speakers’ claims represent dialogical “face-saving acts.” In her study of interaction in a Christian Bible Study, Laura Loeb (2014) observed how group

leaders made interpretative claims about specific events in group members' lives in order to illustrate particular biblical teachings and make them relevant to believers' lived experiences. According to Loeb, this practice entailed collaborative processes of confirmation and revision from which the authoritative ground of the speaker, vis-a-vis a particular claim, emerged; "[f]or a phrase to claim confirmation the other members of the group must be able to reasonably understand a way in which the speaker can make that claim," (Loeb 2014, 524). Thus, in order for a statement to elicit a confirmation response, it is not sufficient that the respondents simply recognize the call as such. They must also recognize the particular way in which the speaker has authority to infer the meaning that the statement conveys.

When Flores states that the "slaves in Alabama" were "chained" to the "field" and to "the master's house" by "emotional bonds," she is claiming that it was powerful emotional attachments, not institutional structures or physical restraints, that bound Africans and their descendants as chattel slaves in America for nearly three hundred years. Specifically, Flores' claims reduce an enduring system human ownership, which was based on racial hierarchies and sustained through numerous property laws, to individual experiences of suffering (see Introduction, current text). In order to forefront the individual, Flores invokes clinical understandings of the phenomenon of "trauma bonding." That is, the tendency of victims of repeated intermittent interpersonal violence to develop powerful emotional attachments to their captors, abusers, and fellow victims (Reid et. al 2013). She is also responding to critics who question the veracity of her claims. Flores explains that she was initially drawn into the trafficking arrangement through what many would regard to be a common innocent high school experience; a crush on a classmate. As Flores told the Unshackled audience: "It only took him three words to get me into his car: 'I like you'." However, for the duration of her trafficking

experience she experienced a significant freedom of movement. Flores lived with her family at home and attended school, athletic practices, church, and counseling sessions during which she met privately with friends, family members, and a wide range of adult helpers. For some, Flores' description of herself as a confident and independent teenager under duress, who nonetheless cooperated with her traffickers, represents an irreconcilable inconsistency that casts doubt on her recollections and her motives, prompting the question: "Theresa, why didn't you leave?"

The concept of trauma bonding distinguishes between internal forces (such as emotional ties) and external ones (such as socioeconomic conditions) that bind women to their abusers. Although the term is a vernacular one, and does not constitute a distinct diagnosis in the DSM-V, the phenomenon has been widely studied since the 1980s, especially in the context of intimate partner violence (see Dutton and Painter 1985; Graham *et al* 1988). Clinical researchers theorize that trauma bonding reflects a maladapted survival response that stems from the cognitive effects of repetitive violence, human's psychological drive to compartmentalize trauma, and a need to form attachments to abusers upon whom victims' survival depends (Reid et. al 2013). As such, the concept parses a paradox which has engendered significant feminist debate about agency and the limits of consent. Namely, the question of whether or not the structural conditions of patriarchy preclude the possibility that women living under them could legitimately consent to heterosexual sex and various forms of remunerative sexual performance (Atkinson 1982; Dworkin 1987; Mackinnon 1989; Morgan 1980; Russell and Griffin 1977). The concept also reflects a distinction of law.

Prior to the middle of the Twentieth-Century, wives who sought legal protections on the bases of spousal abuse were frequently treated with suspicion or outright contempt, especially if the abuse was ongoing and not previously reported (Ramsey 2006 and 2010). This made it

especially difficult for women to successfully assert self-defense claims in cases when they physical fought back against their serial abusers. Such dismissive attitudes were further codified in the decades following WW-II by the rise of psychoanalytic theories which asserted that women's psychological dependence on men reflected a natural state (developmentally developed) and an ethical disposition (Ramsey 2007, 29-30; Friedan 1963). For example, Helene Deutsch, a Freudian theorist writing during this period offered the following critique of the abused women who is: "enslaved by her masochism, the strongest of all forms of love ... [her] psychic dependence is concealed behind the economic one; all attempts to help [her] fail because, even when freed of [her] external dependence, [she] again and again find [s] skillfully [sic] rationalized ways of falling under the subjection of brutal, weak, or undesirable men," (Deutsch 1944, 269). Writing decades later, but with a similar tone, Second Wave Feminists seeking to enact anti-pornography laws accused sex workers of having internalized of patriarchy. As Andrea Dworkin observed, "The whore, in defending the pimp, finds her own worth in the light reflected from his gaudy baubles ... This singularly self-hating loyalty to those committed to her own destruction is the very essence of womanhood as men of all ideological persuasions define it," (Dworkin 1983, 16-17). In her retrospective meditation on this period—the so-called feminist "sex wars" of the 1970s-80s—Anthropologist Gayle Rubin problematizes this stance for its failure to account for the varieties of female sexual desire in order to highlight its ethical implications. As Rubin observes, the anti-porn feminist stance implies "that any woman who might actually enjoy [BDSM] must have something wrong with her," (Rubin 2011, 208).<sup>5</sup> Even among contemporary professionals whose work is focused on advocating for human trafficking victims, questions about the relative mental health of survivor leaders and the accuracy of their recollections persist.

In a 2018 interview, Flores responded to the question “How do you deal with disbelief?” There’s disbelief of my story that I have to deal with sometimes. There’s disbelief that this happens in the United States. It can be so negative and so hard, that you can understand why there’s not a lot of survivors that are speaking out. Like with the #metoo movement, you see a lot of women coming forward, and the number one thing I read on Facebook is “Well, why did she wait 40 years?” You see this with rape culture, where people tend to not believe you because you waited so long. It’s like “Do you understand what it’s like to go through something like that?” When one person says, “me too,” it gives the rest of us permission to find our voice again. It empowers us.

### **The Absence of Evidence: Incredulity as Proof**

When Flores claims that centuries of African American chattel slavery was sustained through “emotional ties,” she is responding to those who question her status as a survivor of human trafficking. She is also employing a dramatic rhetorical strategy to explain how it is that victims of violence and exploitation can be considered as such despite the lack of physical restraints. As Sociologist Kevin Bales observed in his study of forced plantation laborers, “When slaves begin to accept their role and identify with their master, constant physical bondage becomes unnecessary,” (Bales 286, 84). According to Flores the “bondage” she experienced was a sense of overwhelming shame about her initial sexual assault, which she believed would destroy her family’s reputation and, towards the end of her experience, a visceral fear for her safety and that of her family (Flores 2013, 2007; Flores and Wells 2010). This aspect of her narrative invited criticism from those scrutinize the accuracy of her account and who object to that racial-sexualized tone of her writing.



Flores describes her trafficking experience with such detail that is possible to identify the family whom she alleges sexually trafficked her when she was a teenager living with her upper-middle-class executive family near the affluent Detroit suburb of Birmingham, Michigan; a prominent local Arab-American family whom Flores has described as members of the “Detroit Chaldean Mafia” (Ashraf 2008; Flores 2007). Throughout her 2010 memoir *The Slave Across the Street*, Flores repeatedly refers to her own “creamy white skin and strawberry blonde hair,” which she claims increased her desirability to her “cocoa skinned” captors (Flores 2007, ... ). Flores described the arrangement in a 2013 television interview on the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN): “They had a whole business set up ... I was a pretty strawberry blonde ... [a] white girl. They were charging quite a bit of money, I believe” (Flores 2013). In this interview Flores also describes her experience with specific references to physical positions, bodily acts, and foreign objects. When compared to case studies of victims of sexual assault, Flores’ frequent references to her physical desirability and her claims that she suffered no visible symptoms from sleep deprivation, post-traumatic stress, sexual transmitted infection or pregnancy (despite a lack of birth control) stand out as exceptional (Lederer and Wetzel 2014). Flores states that she serviced between four to six men three to four nights per week for two years (Celizic 2009; Flores 2007, 2010, 2013; Morales 2009; Robertson 2014). Such high numbers have caused some sex workers to question her account as an outright fabrication (c.f. McNeill 2012). The graphic and detailed manner in which Flores publicly describes sex acts in which she engaged are unusual among the autobiographical texts written by human trafficking survivors in particular (Murphy 2015, 404 note 60). However, her critics are overwhelming generous, hedging their critique with praise for Flores as a successful anti-human trafficking activist.

During the time that I was conducting ethnographic research for this project in Michigan, I was often asked if I was familiar with the accounts of human trafficking victims in Michigan and, if so, whether or not I thought those stories were representative. Over time, I developed a canned response. I explained that while I had indeed read many books and lectures written by survivors, I did not feel qualified to speak authoritatively about the statistical scope of sex trafficking or about the claimed experiences of individuals. Sometimes my answer elicited a personal disclosure in which the asker expressed doubts about the truthfulness of a particular survivor's claims. Inevitably, such disclosures were also accompanied by qualifying statements in which the discloser attempted to reassert his or her anti-trafficking bona fides.

Late in my fieldwork, I interviewed a legal advocate about strategies that law enforcement professionals who are also parents employ to cope with the emotional burden of investigating cases that involve domestic minor sex trafficking. Like me, this person avoided mainstream media depictions of human trafficking, which, we agreed, tended towards the salacious and provided little useful information, thus needlessly agitating our parental anxieties. As I conjectured about the relative risk profile of the typical middle-class suburban teen, my interviewee interrupted me to volunteer an opinion about Theresa Flores. They explained that while they believed that Flores' story was likely a partially fictionalized account, it was nonetheless an accurate depiction of how human trafficking "really" occurs:

I would. I'd work with Theresa Flores. She's smart. People respond to her story. But I don't think it happened exactly how she says it did. [The police] investigated. So no, I don't think so. But I do believe that it really does happen like that. It could happen like that. When girls are trafficked [while they are living] at home, no one sees it.

Like their colleagues with whom I also spoke, this critical supporter simultaneously raised doubts about the accuracy of Flores' claims while also appealing to that same doubt as

evidence of their legitimacy; what Theresa Flores experienced must have been trafficking because, when girls are trafficked when they are living at home, “no one sees” human trafficking occur.

When a speaker shifts verb tense it indicates that they are dissatisfied with the way that they have started their talk (Widdicombe 1991; Keane 2015). Specifically, shifts in verb tense in conversation have been analyzed for their capacity to signal the opening of speculative talk (conditional tense) or its closure (normative present tense). In this way, tense shifts illustrate the pragmatic function of irrealis. According to Gaik: “The subjective quality of irreal modality, according to logicians, is the ability of an unrealized utterance to evoke possible or alternative worlds,” (Gaik ... 277-8).

In the example above, “could happen” (line 5) is an irrealis which represents an invitation to speculation. Its immediate purpose is to explain why the speaker would “work with” Flores (a definitive claim) despite their doubts about the veracity of her personal story (lines 2-3). The irrealis achieves this by opening up a broader line of reasoning. Specifically, speculation about the way that way that human trafficking occurs in general. The speaker’s self-reflexive shift in verb conjunction from line 4-6 illustrates the opening and closure of this speculation: “it really does happen like that” (normative present tense) to “It could happen like that” (conditional) to “no one sees it” (normative present tense). Thus, this chain utterances draws attention to the speaker’s doubts about a specific instance of human trafficking, just as it reasserts this instance’s veracity that human trafficking occurs; Theresa Flores was indeed a victim human trafficking precisely because no one observed her as a victim as such.

Flores’ reading public expressed similar views online. In critical reviews of Flores’ autobiographies posted to the website Amazon.com, much of the discussion focused on questions

of truth and accuracy. Although a small minority of negative reviewers criticized Flores as the perpetrator of a “hoax,” most critical commentators generously qualified their disbelief. Reviewers expressed doubts about the “truth” of Flores’ “unbelievable” story, which struck many as “fictional.” However, the same reviews also applauded Flores for “exposing” sex trafficking by writing a “wake up call” about sexual exploitation, which, as one critical reviewer put it, “certainly occurs in all zip codes ... at all times.” In statements like these, quick pivots from criticism to praise serve to smooth over the very contradictions that they engender. However, it would be a mistake to read such statements as mere apologetics. Rather, they reflect a double bind that is central to neo-abolitionist rhetoric; because domestic sex trafficking is defined as an invisible problem, Flores’ lament that no one noticed her worsening condition demonstrates the legitimacy of her claim that she accurately represents the broader category of human trafficking victims.

In the absence of reliable data about the scope of human trafficking, firsthand survivor narratives and anecdotal accounts are coupled with “shock and awe” tactics to generate public support for anti-human trafficking policies (Bernstein 2012; Doezenia 2010; Okyere 2017). This has led some scholars to problematize shock and awe tactics as one of the discursive features that qualifies modern-day slavery rhetoric as a “moral panic” (c.f. Davies 2009; Gould 2010; Kempadoo 2015, 2005; Keo *et al* 2014). Anthropologist Gilbert Herdt has defined moral shock as “a socially significant incident or threat that galvanized public outreach and this is commonly associated with the ‘idiom of disgust,’” (Herdt 2009:4). While explicit nature of modern-day slavery narratives do leverage disgust and moral offense, they also call attention to the revelatory aspects of this rhetoric: shock as surprise. For example, a UK state-sponsored anti-trafficking public awareness campaign centered on a simple instruction to British citizens: “Open Your

Eyes” (Hill 2017, 252-4). In examples like these, advocates acknowledge the conceptual leaps that they demand of their audiences by framing their message as a new and shocking revelation. By foregrounding their claims with revelatory rhetoric, advocates assist their audiences in making conceptual leaps required to imagine human trafficking as a rampant problem that justifies significant investments of public resources despite a lack of consensus about the scope of human trafficking and its frequency with which it occurs.

In a public lecture that was subsequently made available online, Theresa Flores introduced her story by first offering a laundry list of cultural and historical examples of exploitation. As she spoke on the stage at the front of the lecture hall the screen behind her displayed images of children engaged in manual labor in a region that appeared to be South Asia. A small boy with dark skin faltered under the weight bricks he carried to an aging kiln. Adolescent girls with vacant facial expressions stood listless against a stucco wall, presumably that of a brothel. As the screen cycled through the projected pictures, Flores affirmed her listeners’ sense of their own social justice awareness while also foregrounding their potential disbelief about her own story, doubts that she presents as reasonable and familiar. Flores prefaced her lecture telling her audience,

We know that human trafficking is chocolate, child labor, agricultural abuses, sex slaves in Cambodia but that's not what we are talking about today ... That's not what it looks like in the United States. We know that in the United States there are one and half million missing and runaway children. That’s a lot of kids.

Enlisting her own process of self-discovery as an illustrative example, Flores described how she came to an awareness of human trafficking and invited her audience to do the same: “Now, I wasn't a runaway. I didn't go missing. But you know what I realized? I had been missing and no one knew it. I wasn't in my bed at night and nobody was checking to see that I wasn't there. I was missing and nobody knew it” (Flores 2015).

In doing so, Flores not only anticipates listeners' doubts, she explicitly acknowledges that her audience will fail to at first recognize her as a trafficking victim just like she did. In her 2007 memoir, Flores writes that she first attempted to disclose the sexual abuse she suffered to a counselor at a college rape crisis center. However, it was not until her own daughter reached adolescence that she contemplated speaking out publicly. Since then, Flores' has shared her story with church congregations, community groups, state legislators, and on college campuses throughout the United States. From 2006 to 2018, the narrative structure with which she presents her story has changed little (c.f. Flores 2007, 2009, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018; Curry 2013; Flores and Wells 2010; Morales 2009). A compelling speaker, Flores builds anticipation by introducing her story as one that will shock and surprise. She then presents statistical and allegorical evidence that frames domestic human trafficking as a phenomenon that is commonplace and yet hidden. As the title of her 2010 memoir states, Flores was indeed "the slave across the street" (Flores and Wells 2010). By presenting herself in this way Flores situates herself as the holder of specialized knowledge vis-a-vis a compassionate community of truth seekers who are nonetheless ignorant about the scope of human trafficking and the specific types of abuses that trafficking entails. She also expands the semiotic ground upon which she asserts herself as representative of a global community of exploited individuals. In this 2015 lecture, Flores redirected social justice concerns about poverty, colonialism, and labor exploitation towards the specific problem of domestic minor sex trafficking within the United States. Having bridged the gap between the unimaginable and the real, Flores then proceeds with her own firsthand narrative account.

### **The Purview of Evangelical Social Justice**

The 2016 Detroit Unshackled Human Trafficking Summit integrated evangelical witnessing with activist pedagogy. Announcements for the 2016 Detroit Unshackled Summit described the event primarily as an “interdenominational social justice gathering” which promised to provide opportunities to hear “personal testimonies from survivors” and instruction for how to conduct effective outreach, inviting participants to come to “learn what you can do to help end” human trafficking.

According to event organizers, the event was also intended to convene a “diverse” group of “activist-minded” Christians. In an interview shortly before the Summit, one Woodside staff member explained that by opening the summit in the city they hoped to make the event “accessible” to young people living in the Detroit and also to attract others who possessed the requisite “cultural and racial sensitivity,” which they believed was necessary to conduct effective outreach in the city. Such an emphasis on urbanization mirrors broader in North American evangelicalism (Bielo 2011; Elisha 2011 and 2008). It also invites questions about what constitutes social justice in the church now.

The Unshackled Summit was organized and hosted by The Detroit Woodside Bible Church. Woodside is a conglomeration of fourteen congregations that meet throughout the Metro area, including one that holds regular services within the city itself. At the time of the Summit, Woodside was one of the fastest growing church congregations in the United States (Lifeway 2015). Woodside established its satellite congregation in Detroit in 2012. Woodside Detroit now meets weekly at the historic Ford Theater in the city’s lively downtown center. Woodside’s presence in the city represents a practical response to the need to increase church membership which is predicated on a set of transcendent concerns and a theological commitment to missionize (which are further elaborated in chapters 4-6 of the present text).

Reported rates of church attendance and religious practice continue to decline in the United States (Newport 2016; Pew 2018, 2017, and 2015; Twenge *et al* 2015). This is especially the case for younger Christians, many of whom object to traditional conservative views on sexuality and abortion (Cook *et al* 2012; Curtis James 2017). Despite declines in religious affiliation and practice, Americans continue to report high rates of religious beliefs and overall positive views of religion’s impact on society. For example, nearly a third of solidly secular U.S. adults surveyed in 2017 agreed that churches and religious organizations do more good than harm in American society (Pew 2018). Churches like Woodside leverage widespread inclinations toward spirituality and favorable attitudes about the potential positive social impacts of churches through evangelical activist outreach in the community.

**Figure 5. Questions Used to Define Cluster Groups from *American's Views of Religion's Impact* study (Pew 2018)**

Questions used to define cluster groups							
	Highly religious groups			Somewhat religious groups		Nonreligious groups	
	Sunday Stahwarts	God-and- Country Believers	Diversely Devout	Relaxed Religious	Spiritually Awake	Religion Resisters	Solidly Secular
<b>Religious engagement</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attend religious services weekly	82	27	12	17	8	2	2
Pray daily	84	72	58	39	44	12	2
Participate in church groups	100	<1	9	2	4	2	3
<b>Spiritual and religious identity</b>							
Say they are very/somewhat spiritual	96	91	86	64	78	68	22
Say they are very/somewhat religious	90	85	85	51	43	3	3
<b>Religious beliefs</b>							
Believe in God as described in the Bible	94	92	87	68	50	3	1
Believe the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally	54	57	54	10	10	0	1
Say it is necessary to believe in God to be moral	62	93	99	1	<1	4	2
Believe in heaven	97	96	94	95	98	12	4
Believe in hell	91	90	81	78	78	5	2
Believe there is spiritual energy located in physical things, such as mountains, trees or crystals	29	0	95	0	99	98	<1
<b>Sources of meaning</b>							
Derive a great deal of meaning/fulfillment from their religious faith	87	67	53	24	20	1	<1
Derive a great deal of meaning/fulfillment from spiritual practices, such as meditation	41	24	28	5	23	19	2
Derive a great deal of meaning/fulfillment from being outdoors and experiencing nature	42	39	59	36	58	64	42
<b>Religion's impact</b>							
Say churches and religious organizations do more good than harm in American society	86	77	70	58	53	15	29
Say religious beliefs help a lot in family relationships	76	54	44	21	17	3	1

Note: See questionnaire for full question wording. Boxes are shaded according to a scale, with darker shades indicating higher numbers. Differently shaded boxes do not necessarily represent a statistically significant difference.  
Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults.  
“The Religious Typology”  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Anthropologists of Christianity note that North American evangelicals are increasingly turning to urban settings in pursuit of more “authentic” spiritual experiences (Bielo 2011; Elisha 2008 and 2011). Cities provide opportunities for short-term mission trips (Elisha 2008; 2011). Urban congregations offer an antidote to the “isolating” effects of the suburbia by placing church members in direct contact with city dwellers where they can enact progressive theological ideals related to poverty and discrimination (Bielo 2008 and 2011). As Bielo reminds us, the evangelical embrace of progressive theology and worldly engagement are “nothing new” (Bielo 2011). Indeed, North American evangelicalism emerged directly from the efforts of the widely popular charismatic Southern Baptist preacher Billy Graham who disrupted the previously “inward facing” tradition of fundamentalism by adopting mainline tactics to successfully re-engage mainstream society in the second half of the Twentieth century (Carpenter 1997). However, among scholars studying North American evangelicals this turn towards urban activism has largely been eclipsed by investigation into the stereotypically affluent white conservative suburban mega-church (Bielo 2011).

By extending its reach beyond its suburban hub, Woodside has sought to engage the growing number of young professionals who have moved into the City of Detroit in recent years. It has also sought to place them in direct contact with other local residents. Woodside Detroit’s young pastor Tim Holdridge describes his congregation as a “diverse and close church family that has a deep love for our immediate community which includes, professionals, homeless, entrepreneurs, young adults, families, and college students,” (Holdridge *N.d.*). Holdridge also served as the MC for Unshackled’s Friday opener where Flores spoke. In his opening remarks, he expressed his enthusiasm at seeing “so many familiar faces” in the crowd. Though predominately white, many in the racially mixed audience who attended the Friday event lived,

worked, or worshiped in Detroit; a city which boasts the highest concentration of African Americans of any large municipality in the United States (Rastogi *et al* 2011; US Census Bureau 2011). Whether or not those who attended the Unshackled Summit possessed a critical racial awareness that would be recognizable as such, it is likely they were acutely aware of the extreme racial segregation and socioeconomic disparities that characterize the area in which they lived. Demographic statistics for southeast Michigan indicate that the region is highly segregated along ethnic and socioeconomic lines as show in Figure 4. Comparison of Income, Housing, and Race in Birmingham, Michigan and Detroit Michigan from 2012-2016.

**Figure 6. Demographic Comparison of Detroit vs. Northern Suburbs (2012-2016)**

	Birmingham, MI	Detroit, MI
Median Home Value (owner-occupied units)	\$439,000	\$41,000
Percentage of Residents of European Descent	91%	13.6%
Percentage of African American Residents	3.2%	79.7%
Source: US Census Bureau “Quick Facts” (Census <i>No date</i> )		
US Census Bureau “Quick Facts” data derived from: Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, Current Population Survey, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Non-employer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, and Building Permits.		

At the time of the 2010 census, seventy percent of those living within the greater Detroit Metro Statistical Area were reported as “white,” (Rastogi *et al* 2011; US Census Bureau 2011). However, within the city itself, approximately eighty-four percent of residents were reported as “African American,” dropping to eighty percent by 2016. This racial segregation mirrors economic disparities. From 2012-2016, the median household income in Birmingham, Michigan, the suburb where Theresa Flores lived with her family in the early 1980s, exceeded \$100,000

and average home values reached nearly \$500,000. In contrast, within the city itself, median housed income during this same period was \$26,249 and home values averaged \$41,000. Connecting these two communities is a twenty-mile-long stretch of Woodward Avenue, which extends from the heart of the city's financial district (the epicenter of Detroit's urban renewal efforts) to the northern outer suburbs. Suburban professionals who commute along this route pass through a multi-mile stretch where income and occupancy rates vary dramatically. Less than four miles south of the warehouse where Woodside hosted the Unshackled Human Trafficking Summit, well-kept middle class homes sit on manicured lawns adjacent to private tennis courts that look eastward across Woodward Avenue onto row-upon-row of city blocks that are widely construed to be one center of extreme poverty in the city. According to interactive demographic maps published by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and Data Driven Detroit, a public research initiative in the city, single-family-home vacancy rates in these blocks hovers around fifty-percent and nineteen out of twenty of children there live beneath the federal poverty line (DDD Neighborhood Typology *N.d.*; Kirwan Institute Neighborhood Opportunity Index *N.d.*).<sup>6</sup>

Those gathered in the Unshackled audience would be acutely aware of such disparities. For many, their own families were implicated their historical development; their parents and grandparents left the city during height of the "white flight" phenomenon. From 1950 to 2015, the population of Detroit, Michigan decreased from nearly two million to fewer than seven hundred thousand (MacDonald 2016). As Detroit's population declined, so did its European American base. Between 1970 and 1980, "more than 310,000 white city residents fled for the suburbs, and the percentage of blacks in Detroit rose from 43.7 to 67.1 ... giving the Motor City one of the highest African populations in the urban North," (Thompson 1999). However, in

recent years, younger evangelicals, like their secular counterparts, are reversing this trend. While the overall population of Detroit has continued to decline, the city has recently experienced an influx of white residents. From 2013 to 2015 the percentage of white residents in Detroit climbed from 8.9% to 10.2% according to United States Census Bureau findings. This statistically significant (albeit modest) increase marks a historic shift in a city that has long been overdetermined by the white flight narrative. While frequently celebrated as evidence of Detroit's renaissance, this demographic shift also coincides with troubling trends including rising poverty rates and home foreclosures (Aguilar and MacDonald 2015). As small business owners, artists, and activists have moved to Detroit seeking low rents, an urban lifestyle, and opportunities to participate in community improvement efforts, they have also driven up home prices and tax rates displacing existing residents (Moskowitz 2017). While gentrification phenomena are not unique to the City of Detroit, these historical conditions provide an opportunity to examine how Christian communities like Woodside are reframing racialized social justice narratives through urban outreach, in particular, through anti-human trafficking outreach in urban settings.

According to Woodside church staff members, the idea for the Unshackled Summit initially emerged from ongoing conversations about exploitation in Woodside's urban satellite congregation in Detroit. Pastor Holdridge provided a brief account of this genesis in his Friday night sermon at the event. Affectionately describing his congregation as the "Underground Church," Holdridge compared the Unshackled event to historical abolitionist efforts by Detroit churches. As Holdridge invoked this narrative, he emphasized Detroit's historic significance as a beacon of "freedom" and "salvation," but he did so without mentioning the African American experience. This post-racial interpretation of the Underground Railroad departs dramatically

from conventional interpretations of this historical moment. For many African American slaves fleeing to Canada during the Nineteenth Century, Detroit was the final stopover on the Underground Railroad, which ended in the Canadian Province of Ontario, just across the river from the city (Lumpkin 1967; Siebert 1889; Tobin 2008). The role that Detroit churches in particular played in sheltering those fleeing slavery, is widely celebrated within—and outside of—the city. By configuring emancipation as religious salvation, Holdridge’s historiography echoed Woodside Detroit’s approach to outreach more broadly. On the Woodside church website, Holdridge invites prospective congregants to Woodside Detroit telling them “I hope you will come and discover the love of God and the love of our church family as we carry out His mission to bring His kingdom to this city!” (Holdridge *N.d.*) In this way Holdridge integrates urban social outreach with religious missionization. This understanding of the purview of social justice resonates with views of mainstream evangelical leaders who embrace biblical mandates for charitable activism as part of a broader evangelizing mission but who are skeptical of secular social justice discourse.

Historically, evangelicals’ commitment to social equity reflects a broader commitment to the tradition of the Social Gospel, a Christian theology which was initially outlined by Walter Rauschenbusch in 1907 (Rauschenbusch 2007) and which later inspired the work of notable world leaders such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Desmond Tutu. However, recent survey data suggests that minority of contemporary Christian evangelicals embrace social justice discourse in a way that would be conventionally recognizable as such (Lee 2016). In 2018, Mark Galli, the editor-in-chief of the prominent evangelical publication Christianity Today, ventured to articulate an appropriately transcendent dimension of social justice for the evangelical Christian: “The ultimate goal of social justice is the same as the

ultimate goal of all our activity for Jesus ... It is right and good, for example, that we seek to alleviate extreme poverty ... But if that's all we do, we will be guilty of committing the greatest injustice of all," (Galli 2018). In doing so, Galli sought to assert a middle ground between Christian perspectives that assert that the church should adopt mainstream social justice concerns and others who reject social justice discourse as a corrupting secular paradigm.

Questions about the appropriate purview of social justice has recently engendered intense debate among evangelical Christians. Notably, this debate has emerged largely along generational lines and in a way that reframes concerns about racial equity as neoliberal anxieties about sexual purity. For example, following George Zimmerman's 2013 acquittal in the killing of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teenager in St. Louis Missouri, Christian InterVarsity Fellowship (a national evangelical stalwart with local chapters at colleges and university throughout the United States) embraced the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM). The chief complaint of those critical of InterVarsity's primarily revolved around concerns that by signaling support for BLM, InterVarsity was aligning itself with an activist community that also embraced transgender rights and supported legal abortion (Lee 2016; Oppenheimer 2016). More recently, prominent evangelical pastors have taken a public stance explicitly against social justice on the grounds that this view introduces "dangerous ideas and corrupted moral values" that stem from intersectional understandings of gender and ethnicity (MacArthur 2018).

John MacArthur, a 1969 graduate of Talbot Theological Seminary who current leads the large California-based Grace Church, presented his 2018 "Statement on Social Justice" in the form of a web-based petition that circulated on social media. While the document largely restates a series of familiar conservative views, what is significant about MacArthur's Statement are the specific grounds upon which he rejects the social justice paradigm and the language he uses to do

so. In the Statement, and in the series of opinion pieces that link from it, MacArthur and his colleagues reinterpret Biblical scripture in order to explicitly reject “white privilege,” “the retribution of wealth,” and the social constructed nature of sex and gender (Asco 2018; Beisner 2018; MacArthur 2018; Harrison 2018). According to MacArthur: “Specifically we are deeply concerned that values borrowed from secular culture are currently undermining Scripture in the areas of race and ethnicity, manhood and womanhood, and human sexuality,” (MacArthur 2018). MacArthur’s Statement has generated controversy evangelical community (Anyabwile *et al*, Lee, and Lindgren 2018). Unsurprisingly, this criticism has emerged largely along generational lines. Senior leaders in the evangelical establishment deride MacArthur’s stance and his tactics as divisive (c.f. Galli 2018). In contrast, some of the most critics who oppose the content of the Statement emerge from the younger ranks for the church; the “young, restless, and reformed” generation of millennial Christian evangelicals (c.f. Foley and Hawkins 2018).

Among younger evangelicals especially, movements to “preserve” so-called “traditional marriage,” have been eclipsed by an attitude of relative social tolerance, global engagement, and direct outreach as the primary form of civic engagement (Cook *et al* 2012; Elisha 2011; Hansen 2008; McAlister 2008). Anti-trafficking scholars such as Bernstein have described such trends as evidence of the “leftward sweep” in Christian sexual reform discourse that has contributed a broader move from an isolationist stance to one that is based on social activism (Bernstein 2007, 144). The issue of sex trafficking does potentially resolve intergenerational conflicts within the evangelical community because it merges long-held anxieties about sexual purity and the erosion “family values” with biblical themes of exodus and translates them into a contemporary social justice activist framework. However, historically it has done so at the expense of intersectional concerns that are central to the social justice framework, especially ideas of racial justice.

Despite the proliferation of people of color protesting sexual exploitation and a general acknowledgement that racism contributes to human trafficking as one of the many forms of discrimination that make individuals vulnerable to exploitation, multiple critics point out that the anti-human trafficking movement has largely failed to reflect on the way that its rhetoric and practices displace women of color. Federal anti-trafficking policies (which configure sexual exploitation as exceptional) are presented as an extension of historical anti-slavery and civil rights laws, thus displacing the legacies of historical racial trauma for concerns about the sexual integrity of women (Buter 2015, 1502-1505; Woods 2013; also see previous). The prevailing practice of using images of white women and girls in contemporary anti-trafficking campaigns mirrors historical anti-white slavery campaigns, which were explicitly focused on the protection women of European descent (Buter, 2015, 1495-1496; Doezema 1999). All of which reinforces biases about black women's sexuality, which in turn contribute to a situation in which women of color as less like than their white peers to be identified by law enforcement as sex trafficking victims (Buter 2015, 1496-1502). These discursive formations dovetail with the needs of capital to preserve socioeconomic disparities that also contribute to labor trafficking (Howard 2018). They also construe anti-trafficking activist pedagogy. African American human rights activists have lamented the "white washing" of the anti-trafficking movement, which is "devoid of black solidarity" (Maynard 2015). Anti-trafficking activists who repeatedly focus on the sexual violation of white women and girls as a strategy to generate public concern and support for their work, direct attention away from communities most likely to be vulnerable to exploitation (due to discrimination and disparity) and back towards home. This effect is illustrated interactionally in the case of Theresa Flores' talk at the 2016 Detroit Unshackled Summit.



### **Self-Defense as Anti-Trafficking Activism**

The audience silence following Theresa Flores' statements about chattel slavery is an interactional problem, which she resolves by appealing to traditional conservative Christian concerns about the family and, more specifically, concerns about female sexual purity and about the safety of her audience's own children, in particular. Flores encouraged her audience to be "nosey neighbors" and asked them "How many of you get up in the middle of the night to make sure your children are still in bed? ... I do." They responded with enthusiastic calls of confirmation. The notion that a person can combat human trafficking by monitoring their own children at night and, by extension, all children who are at risk of sexual exploitation would likely strike most anti-human trafficking activists (religious and otherwise) as ill-informed, at best, or nefarious, at worst. And yet, the sequence of interaction that occurred at the Unshackled Summit indicates that this message resonates. This resonance speaks to implicit ethical dilemmas that emerge within the evangelical Christian anti-trafficking movement. Dilemmas, which figures like Flores, resolve.

North American evangelical Christianity asserts a set of moral values whose central features include protection of the family and adherence to normative sexual practices such as heteronormative monogamy. At the same time, evangelical doctrine also instructs believers to reach out to vulnerable populations through missionary outreach, which idealizes a charitable disposition towards the individuals who are presumed to be in need of this aid. Modern day slavery discourse evokes images of black chattel slavery in order to emphasize the urgency of the contemporary anti-human trafficking movement. However, neo-abolitionist imagery forefronts images of white women and girls as iconic victims, such as the image of the freckled-face girl that appeared on the promotional materials for the Unshackled Summit. In the case of sex

trafficking victims in the predominately African American city of Detroit, these conflicting values and messages presents a potential dilemma for white suburban evangelicals, which is similar to what Anthropologist Gregory Bateson has described as a “double bind,” (Bateson 1972).

Bateson’s model of the double bind, which has been widely adapted and revised in the field of psychology, describes a particular type of interaction in which one or more participants are presented with a primary negative injunction and a secondary injunction, which conflicts with the first on an abstract level (Bateson 1972, 206-07). An essential feature of the double bind is that the primary negative injunction is imperceptible. As such, attempts to adhere to both injunctions results in a tension that is experienced as an inner conflict. While Bateson’s initial formulation intended to address phenomena that related to mental illness and emotional distress, it has also been adapted to explain multiple social phenomena, including religion.

In an attempt to develop a universal theory of the function of religion, literary theorist Rene Girard adapted the double bind model to addresses the various paradoxes that emerge from, or are resolved by, religious rites and ethical teachings (Girard 1977). According to Girard, violence is inherent in human communities due to the continual conflicts that are produced by the mimetic nature of desire (1977, 146). Desire, according to Girard, always actually derives from a desire for an envied model; the desire to possess always derives from a desire to possess that which is possessed by another. The resultant rivalries are a continual source of conflict, which produce violent effects (1977, 169). In this context, the primary utility of religion, its attendant rites, and its prescriptions for ethical behavior, is to diffuse conflicts and other instances of violence by displacing them onto sacrificial victims. In this way, religion redirects real threats of violence and transforms into “a transcendent and ever-present danger,” (1977,

134). While Girard's understanding is heavily influenced by psychoanalytic theories of desire (1977, 169), it does provide an explanatory model for religion that is relevant for the current example. In particular, Girard's notion of the "surrogate victim" is especially helpful for understanding the forces that sustain the belief that middle-class women and girls of European descent are the most likely individuals to become "enslaved" in the United States.

Girard observes that in religious rites of sacrifice,

[T]he ritual victim is never substituted for some particular member of the community or even for the community as a whole: it is always substituted for the surrogate victim. As this victim itself serves as a substitute for all the members of the community, the sacrificial substitution does indeed play the role that we have attributed to it, protecting all the members of the community from their respective violence but always through the intermediary of the surrogate victim. (Girard 1977, 101-102)

When viewed through the theoretical lens that Girard proposes, the dissonance between the realities of disparity that make certain types of individuals more vulnerable to exploitation and the narrative of human trafficking that Flores presents is resolved. So too are resolved the multiple ethical paradoxes that emerge from widespread evangelical interest in sex trafficking, including lingering questions about whether or not this interest is motivated by prurient interest. The popularity of firsthand accounts of sex trafficking, such as that presented by Flores, other survivor leaders, and religiously themed documentary films about sex trafficking, suggest there exists a widespread appetite for depictions of sexual violence in the evangelical Christian community.

Recent research on self-reported rates of pornography use among self-identified Christians in the United States found that fifty-seven percent of pastors and sixty-four percent of youth pastors struggled with pornography now or in the past, with five and twelve percent (respectively) claiming that they believe that their current usage rises to the level of "addiction,"

(Barna 2016). Research on pornography varies widely in its reliability (Short *et al* 2012).

However, given the social desirability basis that would disincline Christian clergy from disclosing their pornography usage, such reported rates merit consideration. They also mirror anecdotal information gathered from interviews for this research project. Secular anti-human trafficking activists interviewed for this project frequently reported that they when they spoke at churches about the way that the “demand” for sexual services and pornography drives sex trafficking, they experienced a virulent degree of resistance, which suggested to them that the those attending the events were struggling to reconcile their own use of pornography with religious prescriptions against. The director of a well-established Detroit area women’s shelter explained:

You can always see it their eyes. When I speak to women’s church groups, they ask me ‘What can we do to help end to [trafficking]?’ I tell them, ‘Talk to your husbands about their porn use. ‘Cuz they won’t stop selling it ’til we stop buying it. Talk to your husbands, your sons.’ That is when I lose them. That is when I see them look away—look anywhere in the room except at me. They can’t even let themselves think it. They know it’s true and they refuse to accept it.

Like their secular counterparts, women who Christian anti-human trafficking activists expressed similar suspicions that some individuals who were drawn to anti-human trafficking efforts out of a similar struggle. At a national conference for the leaders of ministries that sought to end human trafficking through outreach in strip clubs, the discussion of one group session focused on donor motivations: best practices for fundraising. Following the formal portion of the presentation, a casual conversation emerged when one non-profit leader reported having recently received a ten-thousand-dollar donation from an anonymous donor. The group erupted in cynical laughter. Confused, I leaned to my seat mate with a quizzical look. She responds with a dramatic roll of her eyes: “Oh, that was definitely a someone who was feeling guilty.” Over the following ten minutes, leaders of strip club missionaries from across the county relayed similar stories of

others who had donated to their organizations out of a sense of personal “guilt” or “shame,” including ex-wives and widows who donated funds to anti-sex trafficking ministries in an effort to “atone” for the behavior of their husbands.

Whether or not self-identified Christians are more or less likely to consume pornography or sexual services, the popularity of graphic firsthand accounts of sex trafficking among church audiences (such as the audience at the Unshackled Summit) presents a moral double bind for evangelicals, whose interest in sex trafficking is articulated as an interest in combating the very phenomenon whose narratives they desire to consume. Girard’s model of religion proposes that actual victims are always sacrificed as substitutes for surrogate ones. Here the converse is suggested: the protection of the ritual victim never stands for the protection of a particular individual or community; it is always standing for the protection of the surrogate victim. Once “slavery” is dis-embedded from the historical narrative of African American suffering, it becomes a free-floating signifier, which Flores adopts to explain her own experience (as a victim of slavery) and to explain the threat to her audience’s children (as surrogate victims). In this way, survivor leaders like Flores resolve multiple ethical dilemmas that stem from the conflict between the articulated goal of the evangelical anti-trafficking movement, to end human trafficking, and the multiple fears and desires that contravene it. Thus, following Girard, in this way “Religious misinterpretation is a truly constructive force, for it purges man of the suspicions that would poison his existence if he were to remain conscious of the crisis as it actually took place,” (Girard, 134-5).

As previously discussed, the 2016 Unshackled Summit was promoted as an “interdenominational social justice gathering.” It was also the kick-off for Woodside’s ongoing initiative of the same name. “Unshackled Awareness to Action” facilitates opportunities for

Woodside congregants to work directly with Christian organizations that conduct anti-trafficking outreach in and around the city of Detroit. Some such organizations focus on public education: coordinating trafficking awareness campaigns. Others work in ways that place them in face-to-face contact with human trafficking victims themselves: direct outreach and intervention. Through its Unshackled campaign, Woodside Church connects its congregants with individuals who are affected by human trafficking either through face-to-face contact or via organizational intermediaries. The way that these events are thematized and structured reconfigures these groups and individuals and mediates their interactions in ways that are consistent with biblical doctrine and evangelical moral systems. These mediated interactions contribute to a system of paradigmatic relations in which various types of persons are linked to the conceptual category of human trafficking victim: as activists, as experts, as potential victims and survivors. They also provide members of the evangelical public with a list of possible ethical actions, what Anthropologist Webb Keane has described as “ethical affordances” (Keane 2015). As a concrete example of a broader anti-trafficking religious reform movement, Christian anti-trafficking activist events like Unshackled remake public understandings of the social crisis of human trafficking and how this crisis affects people’s everyday lives.

Initially, Awareness to Action primarily offered educational workshops and volunteer drives where members could speak with representatives from these groups and perform tasks that supported their organizational missions. From 2016 to 2018, Woodside hosted guest speakers, educational workshops, and donation drives where attendees gathered clothing, personal hygiene products, and baked goods, which organizations then distributed directly to human trafficking victims. However, since in 2017, Awareness to Action has increasingly focused on self-defense training for women. Facebook announcements for Unshackled events resemble advertisements

for group exercise classes. In these posts, clip art images of women in boxing postures accompany colorful text, inviting volunteers to “participate in the fight against human trafficking” by learning from “self-defense experts.” By configuring Christian women’s self-defense as a legitimate form of anti-trafficking action, Unshackled raises questions about who counts as a trafficking victim, who merits protection, and on what grounds. Specifically, questions related to what practices are understood to constitute appropriate social intervention action, as well as questions about who these practices are intended to serve.

### **Conclusion**

By situating contemporary victims of human trafficking (in particular white suburban ones) alongside the ancestors of contemporary African Americans who were enslaved in the American South and who struggled for enfranchisement during the Civil Rights Era, Flores reconfigures the protection of the family as a form of anti-trafficking activism. Such rhetoric mirrors anti-white slavery discourse of the Progressive Era. However, it also represents an entirely new discursive formation. Unlike her Progressive Era counterparts, the rhetoric which Flores invokes reflects a broader strategy to seek justice on her own behalf. As the CEO of SOAP, the grounds upon which Flores claims her survivor leader status have direct professional, financial, and legal implications for Flores as an individual. This focus on an individual victim as a means to promote the interest of a larger group dovetails with Second Wave legal advocates in the late Twentieth-Century who sought to obtain financial reparations for individual sex workers (specifically pornographic actresses) on the grounds that they constituted a legal class whose Civil Rights had been violated (further discussed in Chp 5-6). 3, current text, “Political Economy of Survivor Leadership”

## Notes to Chapter 3

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<sup>1</sup> The earliest publicly available account of Theresa Flores experience dates to 2006. That year Flores testified before the Ohio state legislator advocating for the enactment of anti-human trafficking laws in the state (Podolak 2013). She published her first autobiographic account the following year: *The Sacred Bath* (Flores 2007). Since that time, Flores has repeatedly told her personal story in full-length autobiographical texts (Flores and Wells 2010; Flores 2013), during interviews with local and national television and radio outlets, in documentary films, and while speaking to local schools and community groups throughout the United States. In addition, Flores also tells her personal firsthand account of human trafficking while giving lectures at academic conferences for social workers, forensic counselors, law enforcement, and other professionals who research human trafficking or work directly with victims. The following autobiographical accounts of Theresa Flores were reviewed for this project: Ashraf 2008; Brava 2009; Campbell 2019; Creel 2017; Curry 2013; CBN News 2007; Celizic 2009; Flores 2011, 2015a, Flores 2015b; Morales 2009; Nagy-Picco 2012; Podolak 2013; Rosenblatt 2017; Ruisich and Flores 2018; TedX 2011.

<sup>2</sup> American slavery was a legal, economic, and moral system prefaced on an ideology of European racial superiority in which people, primarily Africans and their descendants, were held as private property by others who held titles to them: slave holders. This practice existed from at least 1619 in the American British colonies until after 1860 and was criminalized in the United States by the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865. Slavery was distinct from other forms of legal bondage such as indenture in that the latter was characterized by a contractual relationship between two legally entitled parties that was of limited duration; contracts governing debt bondage and indentured servitude specified the duration and terms of the contract (negotiable in theory), which afforded both parties legal status and rights to redress in a court of law (Coombs 2011; Higginbotham 1980; Morgan 2003). In contrast, slave titles conferred status to title holders but not to enslaved persons who were instead treated as heritable property; slave titles established proof of ownership and slave holders could sell their slaves, for example at auction, deed them to new owners, or pass them to their heirs through their estates (Brace 2004; Finkleman 1998; Fogel and Engerman 1974). Slavery also reflected the legal codification of race-based moral hierarchies (Douglass 1857; Du Bois 1903; Morris 1996, 17-36). The practice of slavery was sustained by various property laws and policing practices rather than a single cohesive doctrine (Burnham 1993; Fox-Genovese and Genovese 1983). The type of property the slaves were and the ownership status that slavery conferred varied in time and place: chattel, real estate, fee simple, entailment (Morris 1996). In most all cases, slave holders exercised complete control over enslaved persons and could claim ownership to their labor, their physical persons, and their offspring (Douglass 1857; Du Bois 1903). United States census data for 1850 and 1860 and domestic accounting records list slaves as property of those that held their titles. Probate, estate, and chancery court records from this period frequently list the names of individuals slaves that were included as part of deceased slave holders' estates. In the absence of a will, various court documents were also used to assert that individual slaves were included in a decedent's estate: administration bonds, estate inventory records, administration account records, estate sale inventories, and records for debt settlement. (For examples of slave titles see Hait 2010, Mallory 1992). This complexity has engendered significant debates about the historical legal status of slaves in the British Colonies and the United States. It has also invited racist historical revisionism (Amend 2016; Barkun 2003, 34; Stack 2017). In his extensive analysis of laws pertaining to slavery in the American South, Thomas Morris provides an elegant response to the question of whether or not slaves were considered chattels, personal property, or real property: "does it matter?" Morris writes: "The definition of a slave—a thing—as a chattel person or as realty, defined, if anything, the status of the owner and not the slave. Different rights, powers, or incapacities attached to the owner by virtue of the legal fiction. As an object of property rights, a slave had no legal interest in whether he or she was defined as a chattel person or a piece of real estate as far as status was concerned. The status of the slave as a legal personality was something else, it was non free. Defining slaves as realty might or might not have had an affect on their lives or their treatment, but it had nothing to do with their status. What it did concern, for example, would be the rules that would apply to them if their owner died without a will," (Morris 1996, 65).

<sup>3</sup> In a 2015 post on the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) website, the TVPA is described as an extension of historical laws to abolish chattel slavery: "prohibitions of human trafficking in the United States have their roots in the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which barred slavery and involuntary servitude in 1865," (US DOJ 2015). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) classifies human trafficking crimes specifically as civil rights abuses, stating on its website that the "Trafficking in Persons (human trafficking) is a violation of federal civil rights. The FBI is investigating these crimes as one of its top civil rights priorities to protect those who may be a victim of this crime," (FBI No date).

<sup>4</sup> Notable autobiographical accounts of domestic commercial sex trafficking and sexual servitude include: Amaya 2015; Donewald and Cecil 2014; Flores 2007; Flores and Wells 2011; Jay 2015; Lobert and Gregory 2015; Moran 2015; Rosenblatt and Murphy 2014; Ruston 2017. Fictional films depicting human trafficking include: Bessette 2012; Griffiths 2012; Gurley 2007; Kleiner 2008; Kondracki 2010; Kreuzpaintner 2007; Moodysson 2002; Morel 2008; Perry 2011; Seidl 2007; Van Dyke 2013. Documentary films: Angyal 2011; Bilheimer and Young 2011; Briski and Kauffman 2004; Chakarova 2011; Davis 2008; Dillon 2008; Esau and Pamer 2012; Ezroni, Jacobson, and Kiselyak 2009; Feingold 2003; Fletcher and Thomas 2016; Hammeke 2014; Matsui 2014; Nolot and Dickey 2011; Pankaj 2015; Redmon and Sabin 2011; Schisgall and Alvarez 2007; Soon 2014; Wasson and Wells 2013.



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<sup>5</sup> In her 2011 essay “Blood Under Bridge: Reflections on ‘Thinking Sex’,” Anthropologist Gayle Rubin responds to feminist scholars who condemn sadomasochism (S/M) on theoretical grounds as an “intrinsically violent” and wholly illegitimate set of “lovemaking” practices (Rubin 2011, 208). According to Rubin, this lack of reflexivity emerges throughout antiporn feminist literature: “it is never explained by what standard erotic activities or desires are sorted into the inherently enjoyable or the invariably repugnant. Instead, the erotic preferences of they write seem to be presumed as universal,” (Rubin 2011, 208).

<sup>6</sup> When considering the reliability of demographic data and vacancy rates in Detroit it is also important to consider the ways that neoliberal interests drive the demand for this type of research. Private developers and speculators seeking to expand their real estate portfolios in Detroit, as well as government officials attempting to sell tax-foreclosed properties to them, all benefit from a narrative in which private ownership and urban development are presented as viable solutions to urban poverty and abandonment. In this context, research that emphasizes high vacancy rates justifies the need for public-private development schemes and the expansion of private ownership (c.f. Akers 2013, 2017; Dewar 2006, 172-175). I thank John Nick Caverly, Doering-White, and members of the University of Michigan Detroit School for Urban Studies workshop for their repeated reminders about the role that such data play in extending neoliberal models of governance.

## CHAPTER IV

### Christianity and ‘White Slavery’

Religiously motivated reformers have shaped anti-human trafficking laws since their inception by coupling anti-prostitution legal reforms with philanthropic efforts to ‘rescue’ and ‘rehabilitate’ women and girls.<sup>1</sup> The anti-trafficking movement initially emerged in the late nineteenth century when prominent women reformers petitioned British lawmakers to abolish legalized prostitution and worked to remove women and girls from urban brothels and place them in Church-sponsored reform institutions (Walkowitz 1980, 1983, 1992). Building on the political successes of British abolitionists, Progressive-era reformers campaigned against ‘white slave traffic’ in the United States by publishing dramatic narratives of sexual exploitation, which fueled state anti-vice campaigns as well as private sector philanthropic investment in research on prostitution and programs to ‘rehabilitate’ former prostitutes (Donovan 2009).

By reframing women who worked in prostitution as “victims” *vis a vis* male consumers of sex, Victorian and Progressive-era abolitionists exemplified what sociologist Elizabeth Bernstein (2012, 2010, 2007) has described as the “carceral feminist approach” that dominates contemporary anti-trafficking policy today. Initially enacted in 2000, the United States Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA) was subsequently reauthorized under decidedly nineteenth century abolitionist nomenclature, including the “William Wilberforce” TVPA (2008) and the “Frederick Douglass” TVPA (2017). Likewise, contemporary anti-trafficking activists and policy makers draw on the historical abolitionist legacy as a practical guide for designing intervention programs. Rehabilitation programs that couple brothel raids, social service style

interventions, and religiously infused moral education, dominate the approach to of contemporary United States organizations who work with trafficking victims internationally (Soderlund 2005). When contemporary American anti-trafficking activists and policy makers describe themselves as ‘abolitionists’ who are engaged in the fight against ‘modern day slavery,’ they are drawing on this historical legacy for rhetorical inspiration (Bunting and Quirk 2017).

This chapter expands on this thesis by investigating additional attributes of historical anti-trafficking campaigns. It does so with two goals in mind. First, this chapter provides historical context for understanding problematic features of the contemporary Christian anti-trafficking movement in the United States: the explicit co-option of civil rights discourse by white women and girls and the use of anti-trafficking legislation to expand the faith-based service sector in the United States. These features will be discussed in detail. The second goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the centrality of anti-trafficking efforts to the historical origins of Christian evangelicalism more broadly. In doing so, this chapter, explores the possibility that the central tenants of North American Christian evangelicalism in the United States originated in historical anti-prostitution campaigns, which introduced new targets of evangelization, and, more importantly, new methods of interacting with those targets. To situate the origins of contemporary evangelicalism within the nineteenth century movement to abolish prostitution, it is first necessary to distinguish abolitionist feminists from the Victorian-era women moral reformers more broadly.

This chapter begins by briefly summarizing official attitudes about prostitution during the medieval period in England and Western Europe. Notably, it explores the notion that while church officials and religious leaders broadly tolerated prostitution at least until the sixteenth century, English and continental medieval writers diverged in their assessment of the moral

personhood of prostitutes themselves. While some continental medieval church writers acknowledged the potentially exploitative aspects of prostitution, English churchmen argued that women in prostitution were inherently corrupt and thus beyond redemption. This legal and theological history provides context for nineteenth century reform efforts.

This chapter situates the origins of the contemporary anti-trafficking movement within the allied efforts of Josephine Butler and Florence Soper Booth and the new evangelizing strategies practiced by the Salvation Army. Butler leveraged her family legacy of anti-slave trade campaigning to argue that existence of regulate prostitution in Great Britain was akin to state sanctioned slavery. Founded in 1865, the Salvation Army focused its efforts on assisting the urban poor and especially women in prostitution. But unlike other Victorian era reform movements, Butler and the Salvationists made direct contact with the targets of their interventions through conspicuous outreach at urban brothels and other sites where sex was sold. Also new, Butler and Booth used sensational media tactics to mobilize public support for their abolitionist cause. Such strategies are duplicated in contemporary evangelical anti-trafficking campaigns in the United States, which conduct direct outreach and leverage ‘anti-slavery’ rhetoric and salacious first-hand testimonies of sexual servitude to promote their efforts.

This chapter then tracks the importation of the Victorian movement against ‘white slavery’ to the United States. In doing so, it investigates how anxieties about the sexual exploitation of white women of European descent was taken up by white supremacists and deployed in order to justify violence against freed slaves and their descendants during the period after Reconstruction and during the Progressive era. This ironic transformation of Butler’s nineteenth century British abolitionism provides context for understanding the way that contemporary anti-trafficking campaigns co-opt civil rights discourse by configuring white

women and girls as the appropriate objects of anti-slavery intervention. Furthermore, it provides context of understanding the way that contemporary anti-trafficking policy has been used to expand the faith-based non-profit sector.

This chapter then revisits the historical white supremacist figure Thomas Dixon. Dixon's central role in promoting anti-black rhetoric and the Klu Klux Klan in particular, has been well documented. However, revisiting Dixon through the lens of historical 'anti-white slavery' campaigns illuminates the origins of another key feature of the contemporary anti-trafficking movement; namely the notion that philanthropic organizations, not government programs, are the ideal agents of reform. This neoliberal agenda is illuminated in the work of Dixon's associates the Rockefeller family. Specifically, from 1910 to 1934, Rockefeller and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. leveraged the family's philanthropic foundation to establish the Bureau of Social Hygiene, which fused a capitalist critique of state aid programs with white supremacist race science in their efforts to curb 'white sexual slavery.'

### **Regulated Prostitution (Europe Pre-1850): Early Church Attitudes about Sexual**

#### **Exploitation as Nascent ideas about sexual exploitation**

Widespread calls to abolish commercial sexual exploitation represent a relatively recent phenomenon dating to the late nineteenth century. Prior to this point, the financial exchange of sexual services was a widespread practice in Western Europe where evidence suggest that it was broadly considered to be an inherent, albeit regrettable, feature of public life (Goldman 1911). Until the sixteenth century the regulation of prostitution was largely de facto; the consequence of various municipal, manorial, royal, and ecclesiastical efforts to regulate commerce and to enact and enforce laws to preserve public order and suppress various forms of sexual misbehavior

(Brundage 1976; Karras 1998; Johnson 2014; McSheffrey 2006, 159; Otis 1985). While municipalities were limited to adjudicating financial and property crimes, ecclesiastical courts were vested with much broader authority, including over moral offenses such as ‘whoredom,’ ‘adultery,’ and ‘fornication’, which church authorities prosecuted with increasing vigor as their authority declined during century Reformation and Counter-Reformation periods (Karras 1996, 25; Meinzer 2000, 166-7; Otis 1985, 44-45; Outhwaite 2006, 60).

Prevailing moral attitudes about prostitution were largely pragmatic. Medieval church leaders generally subscribed to Saint Augustine’s fourth century teachings on the morality of prostitution; they tolerated the practice as a necessary measure to contain corruption and to stem ‘capricious lusts’, which, if left unchecked, would overrun society (Brundage 2009, 106; Karras 1996, 6, 32; Lister 2018; Otis 1985, 23; Richards 2013, 118; Taylor 1992, 169). They also recognized its profitability. Prostitution provided an important source of revenue for landlords and municipalities, as well as for those church officials who had been granted the authority to levy taxes and financial fines on brothels located within their jurisdictions (Karras 1996, 33, 37-39, 43; Taylor 170). Anti-prostitution pronouncements from the medieval period should be understood within this context. Confining prostitution to certain locations and punishing unauthorized procurers allowed public authorities to maintain public order while reducing competition from illicit brothels (Otis 1985, 77, 89-99; Richards 2013, 124-126). Restricting the movements of prostitutes themselves, and limiting their ability to participate in social institutions and church life, allowed authorities to contain perceived threats to public morality while enforcing class-based gender divisions that distinguished so-called ‘common’ and ‘respectable’ women (Karras 1996, 14-26; McIntosh 2005, 76-77; Roper 1985, 7-8).

While the medieval church broadly condemned prostitution, along with other instances of women's extramarital sexuality, church authorities differed in their attitudes about the moral personhood of prostitutes themselves. The widespread existence of laws against 'procurement' has led some historians to suggest that medieval Christian writers were aware of the potentially exploitative aspects of prostitution; ecclesiastical courts levied punishments for women who worked in prostitution as well as their patrons, pimps, procurers, and brothelkeepers (Brundage 1976, 835). Likewise, the former-prostitute-turned-saint was a widely celebrated figure in Christian theology (Karras 1996; Otis 195, 10). Citing the biblical narrative of the conversion of Mary Magdalene, some pre-Reformation clergy in continental Europe argued that former prostitutes, like all 'sinners,' could be redeemed by faith (Taylor 1992, 170). Further, they coupled this relatively egalitarian theology of sexual sin with explicit calls for charitable intervention. Emphasizing the social isolation and poverty conditions experienced by former prostitutes, some continental clergy even advocated for efforts to provide material assistance and spiritual interventions to support and convert such women (McCarthy 2010, 32; Otis 1985, 22-23; Taylor 1992, 170). As early as the thirteenth century, the church and noble patrons (often women) established communities for 'repentant' women in France, Germany, Italy and Spain, which functioned as both convents and temporary halfway homes intended to prepare former prostitutes for marriage (Bullough and Brundage 1982, 183; Karras 1996, 33-34; McCarthy 2010, 78-82; Richards 2013, 128; Taylor 1992, 170-173).

In contrast, medieval church writings from England suggest that pre-reformation English clergy largely adhered to the view that women who engaged in prostitution were inherently corrupt and thus beyond redemption. In her survey on prostitution in medieval England, Ruth Mazo Karras (1996) observes, "[t]here are no examples of English clergy who took it upon

themselves to preach to and convert prostitutes,” (1996, 102). Instead, English church leaders appeared to be “far more concerned with the danger prostitutes posed to others [than] with the condition of the prostitutes themselves,” (102). This contrast is possibly a result of the culturally specific rhetoric used to translate teachings on monastic celibacy and marital monogamy. The noble courtesan was likely a familiar figure for lay audiences in Italy, France, and Germany (Bullough and Brundage 1982, 184; Karras 1996, 126). In contrast, in England, where the courtesan tradition was less common, the commercial prostitute would have provided a more readily familiar, as well as more acute, example of feminine venality. Moreover, while some medieval French writers acknowledged that women might enter prostitution as a rational, though lamentable, response to poverty, for English theologians, the financial motive only compounded the prostitute’s sin, by linking ‘lust’ with ‘greed’ (Karras 1996, 112-116). Likewise, English authorities acknowledged the specter of commercial sexual exploitation only insofar as they prosecuted allegations against those who had financially profited from the recruitment of very young girls (Karras 1996, 60-63). As Karras observes, church writings on prostitution in medieval England “assumed that all women who engaged in nonmarital sex would take money, but that was not that which made them sinful: their sin was lust rather than greed. But the fact that they took money put them in a particular class,” (Karras 1996, 126). Likewise, formal efforts to rehabilitate former prostitutes were largely absent, occurring only much later in England in the late eighteenth century (Cohen 1992, 144; Finnegan 2001, 8; Bullough 1987, 69-70; also see Fielding 1758).

Large scale attempts to centrally regulate prostitution occurred throughout Europe beginning in the sixteenth century. Historians differ as to the impetus for emergence of centralized prostitution laws. While widespread restrictions on brothels and illicit prostitution did



coincide with the spread of syphilis in Europe, official proclamations failed to cite the spread of disease as a motivating factor (Karras 1996,41; Otis 1985, 41). Instead, changing public attitudes about prostitution reflected a shift in public morality coinciding with the Protestant Reformation. As part of a broader repudiation of the Roman Church, Reformation leaders in Germany criticized the church's historically pragmatic theology, arguing instead that prostitution posed an existential threat to the bourgeois family (Roper 1985). In Catholic nations, Counter-Reformation leaders targeted prostitution as part of a campaign to combat sexual corruption among the clergy (Otis 1985, 44). For Protestant and Catholic rulers alike, the central regulation of brothels provided an opportunity to consolidate power by expanding the purview of secular authority over the intimate activities of not only 'public women' but also private citizens as well (Otis 1985, 41-42; Karras 1996, 42-43). Previously, secular courts had been limited to prosecuting instances of public lewdness, while the adjudication of various forms of sexual misbehavior was left to ecclesiastical authorities (Meinzer 2000, 166-7). However, beginning in the sixteenth century, secular authorities enacted and enforced laws governing extramarital sexuality and the offspring of such unions (Meinzer 200, 168-170; Dabhoiwala 2007, 291-7). The expansion of civil jurisdiction likewise rendered the moral debate over prostitution available to reform minded citizens as well.

Legal efforts to curb prostitution during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries were largely driven by public morality reformers. Having lost their official authority to adjudicate vice, English clergy, notably including Archbishop Dr. Thomas Tenison (1636-1715), recruited private citizen activists to establish 'moral reform societies' to resume this work (Dabhoiwala 2007, 297-8). These societies were widespread, their membership was entirely voluntary, and their tactics included petitioning city officials and Parliament to expand laws against sexual

immorality, publicly shame those who patronized brothels, and, in the long-established tradition of civic policing, identifying criminals, securing warrants for their arrests, and even dispensing physical punishments to ‘moral offenders’ (Dabhoiwala 2007; Roberts 2004, 19-20). By the eighteenth century, the reform societies’ anti-prostitution efforts engendered widespread sympathy for the targets of their vigilante campaigns, who were increasingly viewed by the public as victims of poverty and over-zealous prosecution (Dabhoiwala 2007, 312-15).

Increasing public awareness about the intersection of poverty and prostitution, led to a widespread movement to establish reformation institutions and charitable homes for former prostitutes in the 1750s (Cohen 1992, 144; Finnegan 2001, 8; also see Fielding 1758). However, rather than attempt to prepare such women for marriage or monastic life, as had been the medieval custom in continental Europe, they sought to achieve rehabilitation through a fusion of religious education and physical labor overseen by middle class women; to prepare former prostitutes for domestic service (Cohen 1992; Prochaska 1981; Finnegan 2001).

In the 1780s, public anxieties over urbanization and increasing commercialization of public life triggered a resurgence of moral reform societies (Roberts 2004, 24-29). Of particular relevance to the current manuscript, it was English politician and evangelical Christian William Wilberforce (1759-1833) who helped lead the charge. Inspired by a the ‘moderate’ Calvinist theology, which eschewed traditional institutional church structures and so-called ‘cultural’ Christianity in favor of dramatic spiritual conversion, continual self-improvement, philanthropy, and direct public outreach to convert the poor and ameliorate poverty conditions, Wilberforce fused the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the promotion of public morality, especially curbing sexual misbehavior (‘the reform of manners’), as the twin causes of the renewed reform movement (Roberts 2004, 17, 47-54). Of particular relevance to the present manuscript, the

evangelical theology and public evangelizing tactics that were galvanized in Wilberforce's reform movement would later inspire the early Christian feminists who led the interventionist campaign to abolish prostitution in England in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Wilberforce's evangelical theology and his abolitionist mission were inspired and nurtured by former slave trader John Newton (1725-1807) and Methodist leader John Wesley (1701-1791) (Hindmarsh 2000; Piper 2006; Seeley 1879). Together with other key figures in the eighteenth century Evangelical or 'Gospel' reform movement, they championed various non-denominational outreach groups that fused philanthropy with religious instruction to the poor such as the Sunday School movement, for Wilberforce provided significant financial support (Colquhoun 1867 Chp. 6; Rice 1917, 16-21). Decades later, the non-denominational structure, public mission, and theological tenants of the evangelical reformers, and the Sunday School movement specifically, whose educational mission was largely carried out by middle and upper class women, would inspire Christian feminists who lead the campaign to abolish prostitution in England in middle of the nineteenth century.

### **Anti-Regulation Backlash: Salvationists Campaign for Abolition (England 1850-1900)**

State efforts to curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, which took the form of increasing governmental regulations on legal prostitution, triggered backlash among philanthropically-minded British Christian reformers. In 1802 Napoleon Bonaparte established the Bureau des Moeurs of Paris, a central brothel system in France, along with sanitation inspections and licensing requirements for the individuals who worked therein. In subsequent decades, other European nations followed suit, passing laws that curtailed the movement of women who worked in prostitution, or who were suspected of working in prostitution, and

subjecting them to medical screenings. Collectively, these laws were motivated by nationalist and class-based concerns. Public Health campaigners and government officials did not seek to eliminate prostitution but to instead sought to regulate the practice as means to prevent sexually transmitted diseases from spreading among the upper classes and among military troops in the newly emerged European nation states. (See Appendix C for a partial list of prostitution regulations in the United States and Europe from 1751 to present.)<sup>2</sup>

Echoing the attitudes of early Church authorities, proponents of this regulatory approach, such as French Physician Parent-Duchâtelet, regarded prostitution as a “necessary evil” and the women participated in it as a “necessary but dangerous” members of the lower class who threatened public health and social order but nonetheless served the essential function of insulating upper class (and other so-called “virtuous”) women from the aggressive sexual advances of men, which were naturalized as male libido and masculine desire (Parent-Duchâtelet 1840). In contrast, critics, often upper class women fighting for their own suffrage, objected to the regulatory approach on the grounds that it reinforced gender-based double standards by condoning prostitution but condemning the women who participated in it (Walkowitz 1980; Sigsworth and Wyke 1972). In the latter half of the nineteenth century, religiously motivated anti-prostitution reformers in Great Britain elevated the cause to abolish prostitution by promoting it as an extension of the nascent women’s rights movement as well as historical anti-African slavery campaigns (Hill 2017; Hua 2011, 98-100; Murdoch 1996, 150; Walkowitz 1980).

It a notable extension of the philanthropic theology advocated by William Wilberforce, the movement emerged from the efforts of the Salvation Army and its evangelical co-founder Catherine Mumford Booth. A teacher with the Sunday School movement, Mumford and her

husband William Booth embraced the evangelical tenants of public outreach: public sermonizing on temperance and chastity and direct intervention that coupled charitable aid and Bible-based moral instruction for the poor (Eason and Green 2017; Booth-Tucker 1872; Read 2014). Following a break with the Methodist Church in 1861, which historians largely attribute to the Booth's zealous participation in the Methodist reform movement, the Booths founded the Salvation Army in 1865 as 'independent evangelists' (Bennett 2013; Begbie 1920; Hattersley 2017; Read 2014). For her part, Catherine focused in particular on providing assistance to women in prostitution as part of the organization's broader religiously motivated efforts to alleviate the conditions of urban poverty. In this view, prostitution was understood primarily as a rational response to the conditions of poverty rather than a reflection on the moral failings of women (Green 2008; Keane 2017; Salvation Army Nd and 2017; Sandall *et al* 1964). Accordingly, reformers argued, laws that regulated prostitution as a legal practice exacerbated the exploitation of lower class women and girls and thus were akin to state-sanctioned enslavement.

Just over a decade later, Josephine Butler, the daughter of noted 19th-Century anti-transatlantic slave trade campaigner John Grey, established the International Abolitionist Federation in 1877 with a goal to eliminate the regulation of prostitution and to change public perceptions of women who worked therein; transforming them from social pariahs who merited policing to victims with few economic options in need of rehabilitation and aid (Doezema 1999, 27; Sigsworth and Wyke 1972; Walkowitz 1980). Specifically, Butler capitalized on her father's legacy to establish an abolitionist platform from which to call for the removal of women working in prostitution from brothels and impoverished urban neighborhoods where sex was sold. Personal letters from this period reveal the development of a close relationship between Butler

and Florence Soper Booth around the mutual goal of ending the sexual “slavery” of women specifically as a Christian religious imperative (for example see Salvation Army 2017). In 1884, Florence Soper Booth, who had risen to leadership in the Salvation Army when she married Bramwell Booth, extended the Salvation Army’s focus on prostitution by establishing the Women’s Social Work (WSW) division in Whitechapel, which led to the formation of a series of urban residential homes and Christian social work centers specifically dedicated to women leaving prostitution (Begbie 1920, 38-39; Keane 2017; Murdoch 1996, 149-152; Salvation Army 2017). However, the Booth-Butler alliance had crystallized much earlier around their mutual opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s.

In the 1860s, British Parliament effectively adopted the French system of licensed prostitution. The Contagious Disease Acts (1864, 1866, and 1869) mandated the central registration of prostitutes in Great Britain, empowered British police to arrest and compel any woman to undergo a venereal disease exam, and allowed for the detention of women who refused to comply. While the Acts institutionalized the public health discourse that prostitutes were harbingers of illness and disease, public backlash against the law galvanized the view that prostitution was a threat to prostitutes themselves. Having been denied membership in the National Association for the Repeal of Contagious Diseases Act (a civic reform group whose membership was initially limited to men), Butler and other prominent Victorian reformers organized the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Disease Acts (LNA) in 1869 (Jordan 2003). Facing backlash from male medical authorities that supported the Acts, as well as male reformers who sought to repeal it, the LNA framed its mission in decidedly feminist terms. Butler argued that the Acts unfairly targeted women, rallied against the “double standard” the Act implied, and advocated for the abolition of prostitution as necessary for gender parity

(Butler 1896). As such, Butler is thus often celebrated as an icon of the early feminist movement. However, in analyzing the origins of the Christian feminist movement to abolish prostitution specifically, it is important to note how Butler's approach differed from typical reformers of this period.

Historians have broadly criticized the Victorian-era women's reform movement for extending oppressive class structures that stigmatized working class women. Women's philanthropic leadership during this period was largely premised on the notion that middle and upper class women should duplicate their customs and manners among their lower class counterparts (Bartley and Bartley 2012, 81; McCarthy 2010, 73-82). In her historical study of Magdalene asylums in the United Kingdom, Rebecca Lea McCarthy observes in opposing the Contagious Diseases Act, women "now felt it their right of womanhood to save and correct those involved with prostitution. Philanthropy became a female activity in England, especially when it came to saving the souls of other women in the name of Christ" (McCarthy 2010, 181). Historical evidence of widespread abuses in church-sponsored intervention programs for women and girls has caused contemporary scholars to question the benevolent nineteenth-century discourse of philanthropy that motivated such efforts (for example see Agustin 2007; McCarthy 2010; Walkowitz 1980, 1983). Such observations shape contemporary criticisms of modern day Christian anti-trafficking programs which attempt to 'rescue' and 'rehabilitate' trafficking victims as well as former prostitutes broadly (for example see Agustin 2007; Bernstein 2007, 2010, 2012; Doezenia 1999; Soderlund 2005). However, tracking the origins of the evangelical movement to abolish prostitution specifically through the lens of the Booth-Butler alliance draws attention to other historical legacies; namely, the use of evangelizing outreach as a way to establish direct contact with women working in prostitution and also to gather information for

firsthand accounts about their experiences that could be relayed to the public in order to call attention to the conditions in which they lived and worked.

Butler appears to have been particular enthusiastic about the Salvation Army's intervention approach. The Salvation Army's conspicuously public evangelizing style dramatically diverged from traditional Victorian modes of Christian philanthropic outreach, both in structure and in practice. Victorian-era philanthropic programs that targeted the poor typically involved male organizational church leadership supporting middle and upper class women who engaged in discrete contact with the former prostitutes, often by detaining them off-site institutional settings that were sponsored by the Catholic and Anglican churches (McCarthy 2010; Bartley and Bartley 2012). In contrast, the Army engaged in street sermonizing, emphasized female pastoral leadership, and established community centers and halfway houses in urban settings (Bennett 2013). While the Army instituted restrictions for entry to their shelters, accounts from the period indicate that they refrained from engaging in many of the more onerous abuses associated with reform institutions of the period (Haggard 2015). Notably, the Army's primary strategy for reaching penitents at this time relied heavily on deploying young lower class female converts to impoverished neighborhoods where they engaged in conspicuous street-wise outreach to attract potential followers (Walkowitz 1992, 73-76). Butler praised this approach as a means to elevate "unaffected women" from of our humbler ranks" by training them for "careers" in public service (Walkowitz 1992, 74). Placing female evangelists in ongoing face-to-face contact with potential penitents also provided the Army with insight and firsthand knowledge about the conditions of poverty and the lives of the women they sought to reach. Critics at the time objected to 'indecent' and 'sensationalism' of this strategy, just as they acknowledged that Butler's associates lacked the naivete that was typical of women Victorian-era reformers



(Sigsworth and Wylke 2013, 88; Winston and Winston 2009, 33). Thus, the Booth-Butler abolitionist alliance appears to have crystallized around the promotion of lower class female leadership in curb prostitution. However, it had been established much earlier, based their mutual opposition to the 1860s Contagious Diseases Acts.

To generate public support for their effort to repeal the Contagious Disease Act and to raise the age of consent, the Booths, with support from Butler, enlisted journalist William Stead to stage a brothel rescue, a graphic account of which Stead published in a series of articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in July 1885 entitled “The Maiden Tribute of Babylon” (Begbie 1920, 40-53; Donovan 2006, 38-39; Salvation Army 2017; Stead 1885a, 1885b, 1885c, 1885d). This sensationalist approach appears to be typical of the Salvation Army at the time (for example see Winston 2009). When police investigators discovered that Stead had orchestrated the event by impersonating a brothel ‘procurer’ and by soliciting a mother to ‘sell’ her teenage daughter to the brothel, Stead was briefly incarcerated (Walkowitz 1992, 115). The Salvation Army’s involvement in the operation also generated significant public controversy at the time (Doezema 1999). Despite this, the operation achieved its intended goal. Public outcry from Stead’s publications, along with the Salvation Army’s continued advocacy efforts, contributed to the passage of Britain’s Criminal Law Amendment Act later that year, which raised the age of sexual consent from 13 to 16 years and expanded state power for investigating and taking action against brothels (Hill 2017; Irwin 1996).

Figures like Butler and the Booths coupled direct pressure on law makers with aggressive unorthodox tactics that included ‘rescuing’ women and girls from so-called ‘white slave traders,’ documenting what they described as the ‘slavery’ conditions in legal brothels, and by publishing descriptions of their experiences in salacious stories in the popular press (Fisher 1997, 130-2;

Green 2008; Jordan and Sharp 2004; Murdoch 1996, 149-150; Walkowitz 1983, 1980, 13-132). In doing so, they pushed back against previous generations of regulationists who dismissed their efforts as “superficial,” “indecent,” and “in vain” (for example see Parent-Duchatelet 1840, 72; Sigsworth and Wylke 2013; 88). This founding narrative continues to mobilize anti-trafficking policies in the twenty-first century. Activists and policy makers invoke the rhetoric of abolition to promote anti-trafficking policies and public-awareness campaigns that cast survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and consenting sex workers alike as ‘victims’ (Bernstein 2007; Bunting and Quick 2017; Doezenia 2002, 1999; Lammasniemi 2017; Weitzer 2010). Federal anti-trafficking programs in the United States rely on public private partnerships with philanthropic organizations to provide services for trafficking victims in ways that privilege faith-based providers such as the Salvation Army (Soderlund 2005; Zimmerman 2011, 572-573). Similar to the Salvation Army’s reliance on ‘Hallelujah girls’ during the Victorian era, contemporary evangelical anti-trafficking outreach organizations recruit potential converts by conspicuously deploying volunteers (often women) to sites where sex is sold in order to identify potential trafficking victims and establish ‘friendships’ with them, as will be discussed further in this manuscript. At the time, the use of popular media to raise awareness about commercial sexual exploitation also contributed to the emergence of a new genre in popular film and literature; the so-called “white slavery” narrative (Hobson 1990, 70; Rosen 1983; Smith-Rosenberg 1986).

### **Progressives Fight ‘White Slave Traffic’ (United States 1890-1930)**

Seeking to duplicate the success of British campaigns, reformers in the United States leveraged the specter of sexual exploitation in order to advocate for the abolition of prostitution.

The voices of white middle class women dominated the abolition movement, chiefly through a nineteenth century network of female-led Christian civic leagues, municipal vigilance, and philanthropic aid societies (Rosen 1983, 52). Early feminists who adopted Butler's anti-regulationist approach to reform decried what they viewed as the 'sexual double standard' inherent in prostitution and sought to reframe women as 'victims' of unrestrained male sexuality (Hobson 1990, 168; Rosen 1983, 54-55). To protect young women from 'vice,' organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) sought to expand the influence of middle and upper class women through educational programs aimed at lower class women and girls (Donovan 2006, 41-43). Likewise, American reformers rallied public support for their cause by showcasing dramatic depictions of sexually coerced women of European descent (Doezema 1999; Fisher 1997, 130-2). For example, in direct nod to the Gazette series, in 1887 the WCTU published a "disturbing report" of sexual exploitation in the logging camps of northern Michigan: "Another Maiden Tribute" (Donovan 2006, 40).

From 1900 to 1920, journalists, authors and filmmakers in the United States published countless accounts of American women and girls who had been lured into captivity for foreign traffickers. Common motifs in the white slavery genre included seduction, death, and disease and typically featured American-born 'innocent' girls from the countryside and 'sexually depraved' foreign-born men who preyed upon them in the cities (Bristol 1982; Donovan 2006, 17; Grittner 1986; Hobson 1990, 142, 200; Lubove 1962, 316-317; Rosen 1984, 47, 49). According to anti-trafficking historian Joe Doezema, the widespread success of white slave narratives raised public concern about the specter of sexual exploitation while also increasing public appetite for salacious stories about 'virginity lost' and 'purity despoiled' (Doezema 1999). They were immensely popular. For example, the 1913 film *Traffic in Souls* attracted more than 30,000

viewers during its opening week in New York City (Diffe 2005, 414). They were also effective. Historians observe that the scope and frequency of ‘white slave trafficking’ was far smaller and less significant than popularly depicted (Diffe 2005; Doezenia 2010; Gallagher-Cohoon 2014; Nadelmann 1990, 541). Yet, from 1910 to 1920, more than thirty American cities conducted vice investigations and forty-four states passed laws to criminalize coerced prostitution. From 1904 to 1949, the United States and European nations enacted multiple domestic and international laws against “white slavery” (Chuang 2010; Grittner 1986; Lammasniemi 2017).

White slavery narratives generated widespread public outcry against prostitution by linking the specter of commercial sexual exploitation to common public concerns of the time: industrial urbanization, immigration, and the independence of women (Bernstein 2010, pp. 49–50; Connelly 1980; Diffe 2005; Doezenia 2010, 1999; Langum 1994,30-33; Levine 2003; Maltby 1994; Ahmed and Seshu 2012; Stange 2002). In her survey of anti-prostitution reform literature in the United States from 1910 to 1918, historian Ruth Rosen observes that white slavery served as the symbolic rallying point for moralists who decried what they believed to be the widespread breakdown of Victorian era middle class values and the increasing commodification of private life (Rosen 41-48). As increasing numbers of unmarried women moved to urban centers to pursue new social and economic opportunities, “[p]rostitution was singled out because it was a visible and dramatic form of illicit sexual relation and the most stigmatized form of female existence outside of patriarchal authority and protection,” (Rosen 1983, 46). White slavery narratives also fueled nativist concerns.

While Progressive era reformers in the United States broadly agreed that immigration was a primary factor that contributed to sexual exploitation, they differed in their understandings of the particular racial configurations that characterized prostitution (Donovan 2005, 56-88;

Rosen 1983, 44). Early social workers that intervened directly among women who worked in prostitution observed that immigrants were more likely to be victims, rather than perpetrators, of sexual exploitation. Reformers such as Jane Addams and Maude Miner Hadden, used the term “white slavery” to emphasize the way that immigrant women were more vulnerable to sexual exploitation due to the stigma, poverty, limited job prospects, and the lack of local knowledge they experienced upon arrival in the United States (see Addams 1913 and Hadden 1909). Those working on behalf of Chinese immigrants in California, such as Deborah Cameron, used the term “yellow slavery” to call attention to the needs of Asian women who were brought to the United States to work in brothels, including those frequented by native-born American men of European descent (see Cameron 1911). In contrast, others employed the term “white slavery” to argue that prostitution primarily stemmed from the practice of native-born women being exploited by corrupt foreign immigrants, especially Jewish, Irish, and Italian male immigrants and African American men who had emigrated to Chicago and New York from the southern states (Bristol 1982; Donovan 2006, 56, 89; Donovan and Barnes-Brus 2011; Gallagher-Cohoon 2014; Langum 1994; 17). Reports published by Anti-Vice Commissions that were carried out specifically in immigrant neighborhoods fueled nativist anti-vice claims. For example, in 1907, the United States Immigration Commission sponsored a multi-year study to document the structure and prostitution of prostitution within immigrant communities (see Dillingham 1909). In contrast, contemporary scholars argue that there appears to be little historical evidence that foreign-born men were more likely to perpetuate human trafficking.

According to historians, xenophobic interpretations of sexual exploitation were primarily perpetuated by politicians who leveraged anti-white slavery narratives in order to promote nativist and anti-black platforms during urban election campaigns (Donovan 2006, 77-79;

Gallagher-Cohoon 2014, 37-43; Goldman 1911). So pervasive was this genre of nativist rhetoric that New York that city officials continued to define white slavery as a crime that was primarily committed by foreigners against native-born American women, despite the fact that court records from this period show that the overwhelming majority of women who were identified as victims in cases of coerced prostitution were immigrants or the children of immigrants (Donovan 2006, 2016; Donovan and Barnes-Brus 2011; Rosen 193, 44). In this way anti-white slavery rhetoric exacerbated harms experienced by non-native women who were less likely to be recognized as victims of sexual exploitation (Blair 2010; Donovan 2006, 56-88; Donovan and Barnes-Brus 2011; Wolcott 2001). It also exacerbated harms experienced by non-whites broadly, in particular formerly enslaved African Americans and their decedents.

A legacy of black sexual exploitation under slavery, in conjunction with violent and hypersexualized anti-black discourse during the Reconstruction era, contributed to widespread perceptions that African Americans were sexually lascivious and predatory (Davis 1985). Prior to the abolition of slavery, interracial sexuality appears to have been widespread and relatively tolerated in some circumstances. Contemporary DNA analysis of the African American descendants of enslaved individuals indicates that black slaves were raped by their white masters at rates higher than previously thought (Gates 2019). The narratives of former slaves indicate that sexual violence against black slaves was widespread and committed both for pleasure and as part of a deliberate economic strategy to intimidate new slaves and breed new ones (Block 2006, 65-68; Feinstein 2018). When interracial sexuality was addressed by the courts, it was frequently framed as a property crime. Courts sought to prohibit the practice of slave owners forcing their white female servants to reproduce with non-white slaves; levied financial fines against freed individuals who coupled with indentured servants, chattel slaves, and fugitive slaves; and

struggled to resolve questions about the legal status of children born from ‘inter-caste’ unions (Pascoe 1996, 48-50; Woodson 1918, 338-347). However, as an increasing number of states enacted emancipation laws, critics increasingly framed interracial sexuality as a moral threat that would compromise the civic good (see Branagan 1818 and 1834 in Woodson 1918, 348). By the 1860s, anti-abolitionists decried the prospect of nationwide emancipation by making dire predictions about the widespread “miscengeny” they warned would occur as a result (Fredrickson and Fredrickson 1987, 172; Gates 2019).

The post-Civil War ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments (1865 to 1870), which collectively emancipated, enfranchised, and extended civil rights protections to formerly enslaved individuals, transformed southern society and the national labor market and triggered widespread efforts to suppress the political power of African Americans to terrorize them through violence (Gates 2019). From the 1870s through the 1920s federal and state officials enforced racial segregation laws and facially neutral labor policies that diminished the influence of African American voters and elected officials and suppressed the education, mobility, and collective bargaining of blacks in ways that favored white industrialists and landowners and assuaged the fears of working class whites (Bernstein 2011, 9-12; Du Bois 1936, 1933, 1910; Roback 1984). Decreasing white toleration for sex between white women and black men was a powerful force for shaping these political transformations (Gates 2019; Hodes 1999, 1993). These Reconstruction era political and economic alignments were further enforced through anti-black violence (Bernstein 2011, 58, 112-113; Du Bois 1910, 793; Mitchell 2005, 18). The grassroots white supremacist the Klu Klux Klan organized professional and working class whites in violent campaigns intended to intimidate newly freed slaves and their white allies (Wade 1998, 57-58, 62-63, 79). Court records and journalistic accounts from this period indicate

that white violence against freed slaves and their descendants was largely sexual in nature, including the rape of African American women by white men and the lynching and castration of African American men for alleged sexual crimes against white women (Fredrickson and Fredrickson 1987; Hodes 1999, 1993; Holden-Smith 1995; Mitchell 2005, 57; Wade 1998, 76-79).

The hyper-sexualization of white supremacist rhetoric in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries embedded a cruel irony within Progressive Era abolitionist discourse that American reformers imported from their British counterparts. As discussed previously, figures such as Josephine Butler advocated for the abolition of the practice in Europe by arguing that prostitution represented a system of exploitation that was akin to the Atlantic slave trade. American anti-prostitution reformers who used to the label “white slaves” to describe women who had been coerced into prostitution sought to build on Butler’s success, by harnessing the momentum of the 19th-Century movement to end African American chattel slavery in the United States (Donovan 2006 and 2016; Rosen 1983, 177). However, domestically, emancipation rhetoric that emphasized the victimization of white women dovetailed with gender-based racial narratives that had been used to justify violence against freed chattel slaves and their descendants, specifically violence against African American under the guise of protecting the purity of white women (for example see Davis 1985).

The 1910 passage of the Mann Act, also known as the “White Slave Traffic Act,” codified the term “white slavery” as a ubiquitous reference for coerced prostitution and indelibly linked the abolitionist cause against sexual exploitation to gendered racial ideologies that prioritized the vulnerability and protection of native-born American women of European descent. The 1910 Mann Act criminalized the transportation of women across state lines for “the purpose



of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purposes,” The legislation was adopted in part to fulfill American obligations under the International Agreement for the suppression of the “White Slave Traffic,” which the United States signed in 1908 (Langum 1994, 3). However, initially the law was employed to target interracial sexual relationships, including notoriously that of American boxer Jack Johnson in 1912, leading historians to criticize the laws essentially racist in origin (Gilmore 1973; Langum 1994, 3).

Legal historian Barbara Holden-Smith argues racially asymmetric enforcement law was by design. Holden-Smith contrasts Congress’ willingness to subordinate Constitutional concerns and state’s rights to successfully pass the Mann Act in 1910 (as well as other federal legislation that targeted Johnson in 1912) with their failure to enact federal anti-lynching legislation in 1922 (Holden-Smith 1995, 32). Thus, while Progressive era anti-white slavery activists contended that the legislation was enacted to protect any woman from being forced into prostitution, Holden-Smith argues that the principal motive for the passage of the Mann Act was white protectionism.

[It]was not simply that white women were being tracked, drugged, and kidnapped into prostitution, as anti-white slavery activists contended, but also that they were being forced into prostitution were they would be used for the benefit of at least some black men. Thus, in my view, it was not merely racism that was at work in the defeat of the Dyer Bill and Congress’s failure to enact any other anti-lynching proposal. Instead, it was the intersection of race and gender: the widespread racist perception that black men were sexual “beasts” lusting after white women and the sexist and racist perception that white women-and only white women-needed or deserved legal protection. (Holden-Smith 1995, 33)

Despite the absence of evidence in the historical record of widespread racial asymmetries in coerced prostitution, racially biased anti-vice campaigns along with popular white slavery narratives during the Progressive era reconfigured “slavery” in the United States as a set of harms primarily experienced by native-born American women of European descent. In their attempts to elevate coerced prostitution as a social crisis of historic proportions, politicians and

reformers vilified non-white masculine sexuality and contributed to the perception that forced prostitution represented an economic system that was even more wicked than black chattel slavery. This racial legacy persists in contemporary anti-human trafficking policy and rhetoric that presents sex trafficking as an ahistorical problem by reconfiguring victims of forced prostitution as “modern day slaves” (Bernstein 2012; Bunting and Quirk 2017; Hill 2017, 253-254; Johnson *et al* 2015; Quirk 2015; Rosen 1983, 176; Weitzer 2010; Woods 2013).

By arguing that ‘white slave traffic’ was the result of immigration, urbanization, the breakdown of the family, and unrestrained male ‘lust,’ Progressive era feminists successfully characterized prostitution as an economic system of gender-based exploitation in a way that mitigated the threat that women’s political action would have otherwise posed, especially during a historical moment in which women were broadly agitating for their own suffrage (Rosen 1983, 46). By establishing a gender-based category that included American women of European descent, Progressive era white slavery narratives and anti-vice activism also did import ideological work by establishing “the boundaries of racial categories [that] allowed native-born whites to speak of a collective ‘us’,” (Donovan 2006, 129). Thus, the anti-white slavery movement exemplified the power of what Fessenden has described as the Protestant sex-gender system, which enabled white middle-class men and women to ameliorate potential points of disagreement by consolidating their hegemony over “members of other religions, races and classes” (Fessenden 2000, 472). Likewise, by advocating for reforms that coupled punitive measures against male consumers of sex with the ‘rescue’ and ‘rehabilitation’ of women who were characterized as ‘victims,’ Progressive era feminists infused anti-trafficking movement with what Bernstein has described as “carceral feminism” that persists in anti-human trafficking policies today (Bernstein 2007). Moreover, by promoting the use of privately funded Christian

aid societies and intervention campaigns to help women, anti-white slavery activists established an intervention framework that continues to privilege private sector philanthropic solutions for the rehabilitation and care of victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

### **Philanthropic Agents of Reform**

The hyper-sexualization of anti-black sentiment in the United States reached an apex in the historical fiction of Thomas Dixon. Dixon's novel *The Clansman* (1905) and its subsequent film adaption *Birth of a Nation* (Griffith 1915), framed the Reconstruction-era Klan as a bulwark of southern white virtue by cementing southern white nostalgia through fantastical depictions of hordes of former slaves intent on sexually violating white women (Carter 1960, 355; Cripps 1963; Kinney 1982, 147-148). A prolific writer, Dixon's post-1900 work is rife with salacious accounts of sexual violence presented in the guise of cautionary tales and nationalist calls to arms (Brundage 2009, 30-31; Lyster 2009, 92; Slide 2004, 34-35, 126; Smith 2009, 64). Dixon is best known as the historical proponent of a white supremacist ideology which leveraged fears about the sexuality of emancipated slaves and promoted the sexual purity of white women as a symbol of public virtue, framing anti-black violence carried out for their protection as a 'sacred' religious mission to defend the nation (Gillespie and Hall 2009, 1; Silk and Silk 1990, 56). However, Dixon's personal and professional history reflects a far more complex and ideologically diverse set of political and vocational pursuits, which mirror shifts in the movement to fight 'white slave traffic.' Born in 1864 to a deeply religious family in North Carolina, Dixon studied political science at Johns Hopkins University and theater at the Frobisher School of Drama, graduated from Greensboro Law School, and then served for a single term as a

Democratic legislator in the North Carolina General Assembly before becoming an ordained Baptist Minister in 1886 (Brundage 2009, 5; Hall and Gillespie 2009).

Prior to writing *The Clansman*, Dixon's had formerly been aligned with the Christian Social Gospel Movement (Bloomfield 1964, 390). There, he championed a religiously motivated liberal social justice platform and used his pastoral charisma to advocate on behalf of recent immigrants and the poor and to promote broad ideas of democratic equality. Historian Max Bloomfield notes that Dixon championed African American enfranchisement as late as 1896, when he publicly stated: "I thank God that there is not to-day the clang of a single slave's chain on this continent. Slavery may have had its beneficent aspects, but democracy is the destiny of the race, because all men are bound together in the bonds of fraternal equality with one common Father above," (Dixon 1896, 52 also see Bloomfield 1964, 391). However, by 1900, Dixon had undergone an ideological transformation and invested his moral crusading energies towards the nationwide campaign against the "black peril," which he described in *The Leopard's Spots* (Dixon 1902).

Historians puzzle over the apparent reversal of Dixon's progressive stance and his subsequent rise to become one of the most infamous anti-black writers and filmmakers in American history. In the introduction to their edited volume on Dixon, Gillespie and Hall suggest that Dixon's embrace of white supremacy represented a reactionary posture that was initially inspired by his desire to defend Southern society and culture against Northern critics (Gillespie and Hall 2009, 5). Others suggest that Dixon's ideological transformation was inspired by the Spanish-American War in 1898, specifically a new wave southern patriotism that reframed reconciliation with the North through the war effort as a movement to consolidate white Anglo-Saxon authority vis-a-vis American imperialism (Bloomfield 1964, 391, 398; Kinney 1982, 146;

Silber 1997, 179-185).<sup>3</sup> However, others observe that Dixon likely did not observe any contradictions in his behavior at all. Dixon simultaneously maintained ties to Christian socialists while also developing relationships with capitalist leaders and financiers (Brundage 2009, 29). He also reportedly counted African Americans among his ‘close friends’ and maintained black servants in his household despite the virulent racist rhetoric he promoted publicly (Slide 2004, 14-16).

In a 1907 interview with the New York Times, Dixon himself attributed his intellectual shift to the work of French pedagogue Edmond Demolins, specifically that author’s 1899 treatise on “Anglo Saxon superiority” (Clifford 1907). Notably, it was Demolins’ argument for “individualism” specifically, which Dixon claims to have found most compelling. In his critique of ‘Oriental tribalism’ and European socialism, Demolins argues that the ‘individualistic’ social ethic exemplified by ‘Anglo-Saxon’ society, wherein individual liberty, individual enterprise, and the concerns of private life predominate over the collective public, offer the best hope for addressing society’s ills by inspiring a spirit of self-reliance, “moral” vigor, self-discipline, and “self-sacrifice” in the citizenry (Demolins 1899, 276-8, 305).<sup>4</sup> Notably, Dixon’s nascent white supremacism was sparked specifically by an argument against socialism and in praise of individual liberty, free enterprise, and philanthropy as more promising solutions for achieving moral social reform. Describing himself as former “rabid socialist,” Dixon attributed his disavowal of the progressive cause, and his subsequent adoption of white supremacism, to his embrace of a capitalistic ethic promoted by Demolins and also by J.D. Rockefeller, whom Dixon described as a personal “hero.”

Dixon counted American financier J.D. Rockefeller among his close personal friends. They were also mutual patrons who supported one another’s political work. Dixon used his

position as a prominent Baptist Minister to champion Rockefeller's fascist and anti-union agenda in his sermons and public writings (Brundage 2009, 29; Gillespie and Hall 2009, 6). For his part, Rockefeller provided Dixon with financial support, including reportedly offering \$500,000 to help Dixon establish a new church during the 1890s (Merrit 1972, 36; Slide 2004, 119). Dixon's relationship with Rockefeller is relevant to the present manuscript because of that family's prominent support for campaigns to combat 'white slave traffic' and its belief that private sector philanthropy promised a superior solution to the cause, relative to government intervention (see Rockefeller 2013). Specifically, Dixon's long-standing relationship with Rockefeller provides new insight for understanding former's disavowal of racial equity and universal enfranchisement, which seemingly contradicted his previous commitments to Progressive causes. When analyzed in the context of the movement to abolish 'white slavery,' the fusion of sexually explicit imagery and religious vigor in Dixon's racist propaganda reflects a logical extension of his unwavering belief that maintaining the sexual integrity of white American women was paramount for maintaining the moral integrity of the nation itself. Similarly, notable is Dixon's apparent defense of private philanthropy as a superior solution to promoting the social good (see Clifford 1907).

In 1910, Rockefeller's son, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., served as the foreman of a grand jury to investigate "white slave traffic" in New York City (Donovan 2006, 89; Rockefeller Archive Center No date). This investigation, which led to the conviction of Belle Moore under the 1907 law that criminalized "compulsory prostitution," buttressed xenophobic anti-trafficking rhetoric and deployed it against a new target; African Americans who had emigrated to Northern Cities during the period known as the Great Migration.

In their analysis of court documents and media coverage of the trial, historians observe that prosecutors in *People v. Moore* adopted a strategy that closely adhered to the polarizing racial narratives of white slave abduction stories that were popular at the time (Donovan and Barnes-Bruce 2011, 605-8; Soderlund 2002, 446, 449). Moore was described in court records and media accounts as a “mixed race” and “extremely light skinned mullato,” (Donovan 2006, 89; Donovan and Barnes-Bruce 2011, 606; Soderlund 2002, 446). Investigators charged that she had facilitated the abduction and sale of underage girls to an undercover agent posing as a brothel owner from Alaska. Despite claims that Moore had abducted children, firsthand witness testimony from that trial indicated that the arrangements Moore facilitated had largely been consensual; the ‘girls’ in question were adults who had worked in prostitution for some time previously (Donovan and Barnes-Brus 2011, 608; Soderlund 2002, 448-9). Yet the jury convicted, and Moore received the maximum sentence for the crime. To secure a conviction, prosecutors claimed Moore was actually a professional brothel “procurer” who specialized in the abduction of young “white girls,” arguing that she was “sexually immoral” and represented “a threat to the natural purity of white womanhood” (Donovan and Barnes-Brus 2011, 606). Moore’s trial and conviction as a “mixed race” “white slave procurer,” as well coverage in the media, which heavily pushed the polarized racial narrative, was significant because it contributed to segregation efforts and further entrenched sensationalistic public perceptions anti-trafficking rhetoric (Donovan 2006, 89; Soderlund 2002, 447). However, Moore’s trial also impacted the course of the anti-trafficking movement in another important way, specifically by undermining public confidence in the government’s capacity to deal with the problem of sexual exploitation appropriately.

Anti-trafficking scholar Gretchen Soderlund argues that media coverage of the Moore trial shows that many at the time questioned the government's actions in *People v. Moore* due to evidence that contradicted the prosecutor's claims (Soderlund 450-2). In light of courtroom testimony that contradicted the prosecutors' attempts to depict Moore's supposed victims as young and innocent, the New York Times opinion writers responded to the guilty verdict by scolding investigators in an editorial statement entitled "Ill-Chosen Agents of Reform" (NYT 1910). Specifically, the piece criticized investigators as "provoking agents" who had "laboriously created the criminality they had been set out to find" (NYT 1910). According to Soderlund, this prominent media statement suggests that many at the time recognized that popular claims of widespread white slave traffic represented a "hoax" (Soderlund 2002, 449). Soderlund notes that editorial letters in the New York Times during the Moore trial read like "postmortems to Progressivism" (Soderlund 2002, 450). However, when viewed in the context of the history of anti-trafficking philanthropy and private sector intervention, statements like that published in the Times suggest an alternative source of consternation; specifically, a fear that government action in the Moore case had compromised the broader movement against white slavery.

In the Times article, the writer laments that the most regrettable outcome of Moore's conviction is that it will arouse "sympathy" for Moore, thus lending credence to those who assert that "there is no such thing as a white slave trade, though the existence of that trade has been provided again and again," (NYT 1910). If the editorial is an indication of popular sentiment at the time, concern about the Moore trial stemmed not from the public's belief that the popular claims about white slavery were overblown. Nor was it a reaction to virulent racism that undergirded such claims. Rather, it was a critique of the government's failure to act. The writer scolds the agents chiefly for dashing the hopes of those who welcomed "official action against the abominable



traffic” and eventually concludes with the following call-to-arms: “All who have been concerned in this affair lie under a heavy responsibility for its unsatisfactory termination—if the conviction of Belle Moore be its termination.” The foreman of the grand jury that initially indicted Moore responded to that call.

Inspired by his experience with the Moore trial, and with financial backing from the family’s philanthropic Foundation, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. established the Bureau of Social Hygiene (BSH). Contemporary statements from the Rockefeller Foundation indicate that Rockefeller, Jr. established the BSH specifically to “address many of his own personal concerns and interests” (Rockefeller Archive Center Archive No date). By the time that the BSH was incorporated in 1913, it had already been actively promoting research on prostitution since 1910. In a 1913 public letter announcing the formation of the BSU Rockefeller, Jr. states that its primary purpose is to combat “the social evil” of “white slave traffic” (Rockefeller 1913). The cause of white slavery signaled a transition in the Rockefeller family’s philanthropic priorities. From 1911 to 1934, the BSH directed Rockefeller Foundation funds towards support for research on prostitution, sexual health, population control, and experimental solutions to curb criminality (Mehler 1978). This included sponsoring institutional programs where women arrested for prostitution were detained for observation and, in some cases, sterilization. While Rockefeller, Jr. stated in 1913 the BSH was primarily focused on research on prostitution and white slave traffic, archival records indicate that prior to 1920, the BSH also funded biomedical investigations into the heredity origins of moral deviance and criminality, which was a particular interest of J.D. Rockefeller, Sr. Correspondence and memos contained in the BSH indicated the Bureau’s efforts, and Rockefeller specifically, were heavily involved in the burgeoning field of eugenics science, including that being carried out in Europe at the Gesellschaft für

Rassenhygiene, the International Federation of Eugenics Organizations, and Charles Davenport in the United States.

Particularly relevant to the history of the anti-trafficking movement, the BSH approach to prostitution reform fused racial theories of white supremacy with a direct call for the need for private foundations to tackle the social origins of white slave traffic. In his 1913 letter announcing the BSH, Rockefeller, Jr. specifically raises concerns about the limitations of government efforts that he witnessed in the Moore trial. In contrast, he provides evidence for the effectiveness of the philanthropic approach, explaining that in a mere three years, the BSU had already undertaken multiple widespread surveys on prostitution in the United States and Europe (Rockefeller 1913).<sup>5</sup> Correspondence between Rockefeller, Jr. and Charles Davenport indicate the former's enthusiasm not only for Davenport's theories about the genetic origins of criminality, but also for his belief that the judicial system was fundamentally limited in its capacity to curb crime (BSH 1912; Davenport 1912; Rockefeller 1912). As Davenport put it to Rockefeller, "I am convinced it [the BSH] is the thing required to reform our legal procedure. Would that its [our country's] motto were: All men are born unequal. Equality before the law is cruelty and injustice." (Davenport 1912, 20) Rockefeller enthusiastically agreed that a eugenically oriented criminal justice system was "immensely important." The Bureau of Social Hygiene, with immense resources and a simple eugenic creed, Rockefeller, Jr. argued, had set out to correct this "cruelty and injustice." (Rockefeller 1912, 21). From 1911 to 1916, BSH published a series of studies about prostitution in New York City. While the BSH later expanded its initial focus on 'white slavery' and prostitution to a investigate sexual health and criminality more broadly, from 1911 to 1934, the Bureau of Social Hygiene funded research and advocated

for public policy on sex and crime establishing a precedent for philanthropic involvement in this sector.

### **Religious Liberty 1927 to 1996: from White Separatism to “Charitable Choice”**

While the Constitution of the United States prohibits congress from establishing religion or restricting the free expression thereof, the notion of a “separation of church and state” (a phrase attributed to Thomas Jefferson in 1802, has engendered intense public debate. Prior to 1980, the anti-establishment clause was primarily invoked in relation to education policy.<sup>6</sup> Nineteenth century nativist reformers mobilized xenophobic anti-Catholic sentiment in order to argue that public funding should not be used to support parochial schools (Fessenden 2007). Later, the 1925 Scopes Trial, which galvanized debates over evolutionary science, engendered a collective identity among Protestants in the South around the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, and specifically a literalist reading of the biblical narrative of human creation (Lienesch 2007). The spirit of the anti-establishment clause was also questioned in the decades after WWII by fundamentalist Christians who sought to defend racially segregated schooling on religious liberty grounds (Sorauf 2015).

Prior to WWII, Christian fundamentalists generally adhered to a separatist ethic, which entailed a skeptical attitude towards civic engagement broadly (Marsden 1980; Watt 1990; Wacker and Wacker 2009). Evangelicals’ political disinclination was affirmed by federal legislation passed in the 1950s, which restricted political lobbying by church leaders. The 1954 Johnson Amendment altered IRS regulations to prohibit all 501(c)(3) organizations (including churches and FBOs) from endorsing or opposing political candidates. Despite its partisan anti-electioneering roots, this anti-establishment policy passed without controversy (Davidson 1998).

Given this history, the rise of the so-called “Christian Right” as a formidable political body in the latter half of the twentieth century merits explanation.

The politicization of evangelical Christianity in the United States can be partly attributed to the efforts of Southern conservative radio and televangelist preachers (Apostolidis 2000). Figures such as Bob Jones, Sr. (1883-1968) and Billy Graham, Jr. (1918-2018) established large followings among Protestant Christians that would later become mobilized as an evangelical fundamentalist political force. Analyzing the historical legacy of these figures allows us to track the ascendance of evangelical Christianity to national political prominence. It also illuminates the development of problematic tenants of the contemporary evangelical anti-trafficking movement, namely ambivalent attitudes towards human rights and racial justice and a commitment to theocratic neoliberalism, especially in the social service sector.

During their lifetimes, Jones and Graham diverged on questions of racial segregation and the limits of ecumenical theology. A vocal opponent of denominational and racial integration, in 1927 Jones leveraged support from his extensive broadcast audience in to establish a private Christian college: Bob Jones University (BJU). A racially segregated fundamentalist Christian academy, BJU’s mission responded to Southern Christians who perceived increasingly secularization and diversity in the public sphere as a threat to their way of life. After the Scope’s trial, biblical fundamentalists voiced concerns that learning evolutionary theory in college was causing Christian students to ‘lose their faith’ (Balmer 2006). In this way, BJU’s fundamentalist curriculum, which emphasized biblical literalism, creationist theory, and the Christian origins of European philosophy, sought to preserve students’ faith. Likewise, BJU’s strict policies of racial segregation sought to preserve its students’ white Anglo Saxon Protestant ‘heritage’ (for example see Jones 1960).

In contrast to Jones' separatist fundamentalism, which sought to preserve the faith by erecting barriers between Christians and the 'world,' Billy Graham promoted an outward oriented evangelical theology. The widespread network of evangelical institutions that Graham founded fostered the development of a historically unprecedented international interdenominational following (Aikman 2000; Finstuen *et al* 2017; Wacker 2014). Graham's seminary institutes and university outreach organizations promoted an evangelical theology that prioritized religious conversion through a doctrine of personal transformation and spiritual 'rebirth,' regardless of denominational affiliation. Jones is reported to have been particularly opposed to Graham's ecumenicalism, once lamenting in that Billy Graham had done more damage to the Christian faith than any other living figure (...). After WWII, Graham's dramatically public approach to evangelizing, which combined revivalist preaching with syndicated radio broadcasts, in conjunction with his social and economic conservatism, which promoted American corporate capitalism as a champion of democratic and Christian values, effectively united a disparate group of conservative southern Protestants (especially Baptists) and charismatically inclined fundamentalists. A highly visible public figure, Graham developed an international following through national and international speaking tours and while serving as a bi-partisan presidential 'spiritual advisor.' Unlike Jones, Graham included African Americans in his pastoral staff. However, he maintained an ambivalent attitude about the Civil Rights movement. Graham's evangelical theology, which prioritized personal transformation through spiritual conversion over social justice and structural change, in conjunction with his Graham's "color blind" ethic, allowed him to develop support of some African American and left-leaning white evangelicals in ways that did not challenge the implicit white supremacism of conservative Christians in the South (Evans 2017; Miller 2009). Thus, while Graham is often viewed as a relative moderate, by

coalescing the evangelical community and raising its profile, Graham “cleared the path” for Southern Republicans and Christian Right leaders who led militant moral reform campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s (Miller 2009).

In 1976, Jerry Falwell (1933-2007) and Paul Weyrich (1994-2008) challenged the IRS’ revocation of Bob Jones University’s tax exemption by defending the school’s racially segregationist policies on the basis of “religious freedom” (Balmer 2006; Freed and Polsby 1983). Under federal tax code reforms enacted with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) revoked the tax-exempt status of private “segregation academies” like BJU. This federal action raised the ire of fundamentalist Protestants who at the time represented a small fraction of North American Christians. Leading the charge against the federal government were Falwell, who had by then risen to prominence as a national televangelist, and Weyrich, a neoconservative Catholic pundit who co-founded the Heritage Foundation in 1971 (Rothstein 2013). Falwell and Weyrich’s effort to preserve BJU’s segregated admission policies was ultimately unsuccessful.<sup>7</sup> However, By reframing the right to preserve racial segregation specifically as an effort to protect the civil rights and liberties of ‘religious minorities,’ Falwell and Weyrich succeeded in mobilizing what had previously been a relatively apolitical demographic: fundamentalist and evangelical Christians. In an interview with historian Randall Balmer, longtime BJU administrator Elmer L. Rumminger claimed that federal action against Bob Jones University was the catalyst that political mobilized the national evangelical community. According to Balmer: “[It] alerted the Christian school community about what could happen with government interference [in the affairs of evangelical institutions]. That was really the major issue that got us all involved,” (Balmer 2014).

Likewise, biographers observe that while Billy Graham resisted aligning himself with militant moral campaigns, his social values were consistent with the fundamentalist faction; like Falwell, Graham criticized sexual liberation, second wave feminists, and same sex marriage (Miller 2009). Like the neoconservative Weyrich, Graham vocally opposed communism and supported U.S. foreign intervention in the former Soviet Union, but was skeptical of domestic state-sponsored humanitarian efforts within the United States (Aikman 2010; Wacker 2014). Arguing that American capitalism was ultimately a force for good, Graham encouraged corporate leaders to exercise their moral agendas through internal policies, business practices, and philanthropic activity (...). Thus, despite their theological differences, by the late 1990s, the movements that Jones and Graham established had converged in a neoliberal theology, which leveraged national political debates to consolidate the authority of Southern conservative Protestant Christians.

By first successfully mobilizing conservative Christian leaders around the need to protect religious liberty in the mid 1970s, Falwell and Weyrich established the platform upon which they later galvanized support of the evangelical public to impose their social values outward. For example, Biblical fundamentalists have argued for doctrines of constitutional “originalism” as an extension of fundamentalist biblical eschatology (Crapanzano 2000). Of particular relevance to the present manuscript, since the 1980s, a highly mobilized evangelical coalition has led conservative opposition to inclusive an equitable sex and gender policy. Specifically, evangelical leaders characterized the rise of the LGBTQ rights movement and the easing of legal restrictions on divorce, abortion, and same sex marriage as a threat ‘traditional family values’ and as to hostile evangelical Christians in particular (Diamond 1989; Dowland 2014; Greeley and Hout 2008; Herman 1997). The political mobilization of evangelical morality is perhaps best

characterized by the efforts of the Moral Majority, an evangelical organization founded by Jerry Falwell in 1979, which lobbied on behalf Republican politicians and conservative policies in the 1980s. The highly polarized speech about sexuality, which characterized the so-called ‘culture wars’ of this period, has inspired scholars to focus on the communicative practices of evangelical Christians.

In the mid-1990s, a national network of conservative Christian organizations effectively mobilized against sex education programs in local public schools by arguing that such programs broadly undermined conservative Christian ‘family values.’ In doing so they further galvanized the emergent evangelical public. According to Sociologist Janice Irvine, this anti-sex education campaign hinged on a theory performative speech. Specifically, conservative critics argued that comprehensive sex education programs were based ‘indiscriminate theory of sexuality.’ Further, they warned that teaching students about birth control, sexual health, and sexual inclusivity, such programs encouraged students to engage in ‘undesirable’ behaviors, namely promiscuity and homosexual sex (Irvine 2000). Thus, critics warned, sexually inclusive comprehensive public sex education would inevitably lead to a revolution in gender norms and the dissolution of ‘the family’ itself (Zimmerman 2005).

The evangelical counter narrative to inclusive comprehensive sex education largely developed via vast array of unaffiliated Christian organizations. This included an expansive network of radio and televangelists which linked otherwise unaffiliated like-minded followers (for example see Apostolidis 2000; Kintz and Lessage 1998; Oosterban 2008). It also included so-called ‘self-help’ programs, which combined gendered-based moral instruction with therapeutic intervention focused on sexuality, marriage, and parenting (for example see Bartkowski 2004; Burke 2016; Cole-Lowen 2005; DeRogatis 2005; Diamond 2000; Griffith



1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2003a, 2003b; Viefhues-Bailey 2012). The emergence of this expansive evangelical self-help network actualized the claims of previous evangelical leaders like Billy Graham who argued that religious instruction represented superior solution for addressing problems related to sexuality and the family. Likewise, it allowed proponents of privatization to argue that independent programs offered a viable alternative to state-sponsored intervention schemes. Thus, while the historical development of evangelical family values politics is often characterized as an effort to stem government encroachment into private family life (i.e. to expand religious liberty and to insulate Christian families), increasing federal investment in religiously infused social service programs reflects an outward expansion; specifically as an effort to publicly enforce evangelical values over domains of life that are generally considered to be private.

The effort to expand evangelical family values via federal policy is evident in the movement for “Charitable Choice.” Charitable Choice refers to a series of federal policies that expanded federal funding to faith-based social service agencies beginning in the late 1990s. Prior to the mid-1990s, religious and secular non-governmental organizations were previously able to receive federal funding under restricted circumstances. However, after the 1996 passage of the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act" (PRWORA), Charitable Choice provisions directed specific changes to programs administered by the United States Departments of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Labor (DOL). Specifically, these changes eased eligibility restrictions for faith-based organizations (FBOs) while also expanding their eligibility to receive funds from block grant programs that funded food stamps (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF), welfare, substance abuse and mental health treatment, and employment training programs (Cnaan and Boddie 2002, 224-225;

Bush no date). Charitable Choice policy thus actualized the political goals of conservative evangelicals in multiple ways.

By elevating the profile of faith-based organizations, Charitable Choice provisions represented a constitutional victory for religious liberty advocates. By promoting organizations that combine religiously motivated and morally inflected education with secular social service interventions, Charitable Choice furthered the goals of multiple generations of social conservatives who saw the widespread adoption of traditional ‘family values’ as the solution to various social problems. Likewise, by decreasing government involvement in the delivery of public welfare services, Charitable Choice responded to the concerns of economic conservatives who criticize state-sponsored services as ‘costly’ and ‘ineffective.’ However, while previous reformers advocated for philanthropic intervention as an alternative to state sponsored programs, Charitable Choice channel federal funds directly to religious groups. In this way, the policy represents a new theocratic authority that has directly contributed to the expansion of the faith-based sector. Notably, the passage of the 2000 TVPA provided a new avenue for public investment in religiously sponsored programs that partner with the federal government to provide services for trafficking victims.

## Notes to Chapter 4

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<sup>1</sup> Additional legal instruments that have dealt with human trafficking include the International Agreement for the Suppression of the “White Slave Traffic” (1904), the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic (1910), the International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children (1921), provisions within the Slavery Convention (1926), the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age (1933), the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956), segments against the trafficking of persons within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (1966), The United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979).

<sup>2</sup> Appendix: Anti-Trafficking Laws 1715 to present

<sup>3</sup> The Spanish-American War, which expanded United States territories in Cuba, the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico, has been broadly viewed by historians as a watershed moment for sectarian integration in the aftermath of the United States Civil War and the period of Reconstruction in the South. In an effort to inspire southern soldiers to enlist, military officials promoted the war effort as an opportunity for American unification (Silber 1997). This included appointing former Confederate generals in prominent positions; an action which inspired patriotic sentiment among southerners, if not their commitment to serve (Turpie 2014, 879). The conflict subsequently became an important symbol of southern heroism in the decades that followed (Case 2002, 609). In addition, the valor of African American soldiers who served in the conflict inspired new respect, especially among the military ranks (Johnson 1970). Despite this, the basis for the patriotism inspired by the Spanish-American War was far more complex, especially in the southern states. As Turpie argues, at the time southern men resisted patriotic appeals for military service as they were inclined to heroize masculine defense of the family over participation in military action to liberate Cuba (Turpie 2014, 892). Specifically, Turpie presents evidence that southern white men were hesitant to serve abroad due because they believed African American men would commit violence against white women on the home front during their absence (2014, 884-888). However, while Turpie interprets southern racism as a barrier to southern support for the Spanish-American War, for Dixon, the war was the natural extension of white supremacist ideology. According to Bloomfield, as Dixon wrestled with the question of whether or not the United States should extend democratic representation to the newly acquired territories, his support for limiting enfranchisement for non-whites (especially in the Philippines) cemented his belief in the racial ‘superiority’ of Anglo-Saxons (Bloomfield 1964, 391).

<sup>4</sup> Edmund Demolins (1805-1907) was a student of Pierre Guillaume Frédéric le Play and Henri de Tourville who contributed to late Nineteenth-century French Sociology as an editor for *la Réforme Sociale* and later, by founding the journal *la Science Sociale* (Savoye 54-56). By 1900, his sweeping economic social history of Europe *À quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?* (Demolins 1899) had been re-released in multiple French and English translation editions. The social theory outlined in this text chiefly distinguishes between ‘collectivist’ and ‘individualistic’ societies. According to Demolins, while the former are characterized by a tendency to rely on collective, which inspires “indolence” and is best exemplified by non-European cultures, in the latter, the ‘individual’ and the ‘private’ predominate over the collective and public life (Demolins 1899, 209, 305). Arguing that ‘Anglo-Saxons’ best exemplify the individualistic society, Demolins warns against ‘collectivist’ tendencies in Europe, especially socialism in Germany, Eastern Europe, and Russia, which he compares to the ‘tribe’ based societies of Asia and Africa (Demolins 1899, 206). Demolins’s core are based on a decidedly imperialist racist reading of history. For example, he claims that English conquest provides evidence of Anglo-Saxon superiority (1899, 134, 212). However, his moral argument is predominately an economic one. Demolins praises ‘individual enterprise’ and ‘self-reliance,’ especially as he perceived it in the United States (1899, 355-257). Demolins concludes his case with a chapter on “The Insufficiency of Moral Action and the Symptoms of Social Regeneration” leaving the reader with the following key point: “individualist societies form the most favourable centres for a moral life full of energy, intensity and resistance [because] Moral action consists in conquering self. Now, there is no better training possible for self-conquest that the social formation which obliges all individuals to rely on themselves alone; there is no training better fitted for this for a ‘serious life,’ non where the spirit of ‘sacrifice’ becomes more natural, more habitual, and more generally applicable,” (Demolins 1899, 305).

<sup>5</sup> In a 1913 letter announcing the Bureau of Social Hygiene (BSH), John D. Rockefeller, Jr. described the bureau’s early research projects writing, “This survey has covered not only houses of prostitution, Raines Law hotels, disorderly saloons, cafes and restaurants, massage parlors and other places where vicious people congregate, but also the personal histories of some two thousand prostitutes; and a study of all the case records for one year of a great majority of the hospitals and dispensaries in New York City, with a view to ascertaining the prevalence of venereal diseases and their ratio to all other diseases,(Rockefeller 1913).

<sup>6</sup> Specific court rulings in the education sector that paved the way for federal investment in FBOs include: *Flast v. Cohen* (1968)

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Valley Forge and People Christian High School v. Americans United for Separation of Church and State (1982); Bob Jones University v. United States (1983).

<sup>7</sup> In 1976, BJU revised its admission policy to allow the entry of all Christian black students, regardless of marital status, and but preserved its prohibitions against interracial dating until 2000.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **The Expansion of Faith-Based Service Sector: ‘All they really need is Jesus’**

In Spring 2016 approximately thirty anti-human trafficking professionals and volunteers gathered in a boardroom at the headquarters of the Salvation Army Eastern Division in Detroit, Michigan. They had convened for a meeting of the Joint Anti-Trafficking Task Force (JATT); a regional interagency effort funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to expand partnerships between law enforcement professionals, who investigate human trafficking crimes, and non-governmental health and human service agencies, who provide services to trafficking victims. Officially, JATT funded ongoing coordination between the Michigan State Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and specific service providers in Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland counties. Additionally, JATT funded an administrative position at the Salvation Army to distribute funds to sub-grantees and manage the victim caseload.

When the JATT administrator asked me to participate with the task force she first explained JATT’s complex bureaucratic structure; a conversation that involved the creation of an elaborate diagram on a yellow legal pad. She also explained that the Salvation Army maintained its eligibility to receive and administer federal funds by strictly separating its Christian proselytizing efforts from its secular social service programs. However, in practice, this separation was less rigid than I had been led to believe. In addition to named JATT partners, the ostensibly closed-door meeting also included various unofficial participants; specifically,

volunteers from faith based groups and leaders of an evangelical mega church, whose annual anti-trafficking fundraiser had recently raised \$250,000.

Despite their shared commitment to ending human trafficking, I observed that faith-based and secular activists conceptualized the root causes of trafficking in different ways. Likewise, they advocated for different types of solutions. For example, church leaders frequently emphasized an apparent lack of victim service programs in order to promote the anti-trafficking campaigns they sponsored. In contrast, representatives from secular agencies told me their capacity to house and serve trafficking victims generally exceeded the number of victims identified. Indeed, at the time of the JATT meeting, one such agency was closing its trafficking victim program due to a lack of clients. A state official offered one possible explanation for involving churches.

When the meeting adjourned, an administrator from the office of the Michigan Attorney General approached me to discuss my work. Handing me his business card he explained, “I’m not a religious man but I admire the work that people from churches like you are doing.” Concerned that he had misconstrued my research goals, I clarified that my interest was anthropological; I did not represent or advocate for the religious groups I studied. Undeterred, he continued: “My office has the ability to help but we only go so far. What you have is the ability to address people’s suffering on their inside. Government can help with the externals but only religion can help with the internals.”

This chapter unpacks the government and religious partnerships underlying federal anti-trafficking policy. To understand how a faith-based organization like the Salvation Army came to lead a federally funded law enforcement task force, this chapter examines how government anti-trafficking mandates have expanded public-private partnerships in the social service sector.

To understand why a state official would suggest that religion is the “only” epistemology capable of alleviating mental and emotional suffering, this chapter investigates the political apparatus that privileges faith-based organizations in those partnerships.

### **Chapter Summary**

The preceding ethnographic vignette illustrates one example of the way that faith-based actors craft local anti-human trafficking policy, influence its enforcement, and how state actors receive their funds. Previous scholars and journalists have documented the ideological and financial involvement of faith-based actors in driving anti-trafficking policy and implementation. The chapter builds on this work by fleshing out these claims with the new historical and financial information. It also argues that just as religious actors have helped drive anti-trafficking movement, this movement has likewise provided vital financial and ideological resources that has reinvigorated the political will of evangelical Christians in the United States through ecumenical alliances and rhetoric of international humanitarianism.

This chapter begins by providing a brief overview the private social service sector in the United States, focusing specifically on growth among anti-human trafficking non-governmental organizations (NGOs) after the passage of the 2000 Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA). Publicly available tax data from the 2006 to 2016 indicates that the privatization of anti-trafficking services has coincided with rapid expansion of the faith-based service sector. This analysis supports the conclusions of ethnographic and survey research in the state of Michigan, which suggests that public investment in anti-human trafficking efforts is increasingly being channeled towards faith-based entities specifically.

This chapter then examines how federal anti-human trafficking policy in the United States has increased the political influence of conservative evangelical activists in large part by expanding the institutional capacity of their constituents. Specifically, it focuses on the political and economic apparatus that encourages direct federal investment in religious health and human service providers. This chapter analyzes this apparatus within the context of the push to expand religious exceptionalism in the United States more broadly. To do so it traces the history of the politicization of evangelical Christianity, demonstrating how contemporary federal “Charitable Choice” provisions grew from and expand upon of the historical movement to secure “religious freedoms.”

This chapter also examines the various ways that federal anti-human trafficking policy extends the ideological and political interests of American evangelicals. This chapter analyzes the history of the policy debates surrounding the TVPA to demonstrate the central role that religious actors played in the drafting and passage of the law. The language of the TVPA reflects this. Specifically, the TVPA parses human trafficking crimes in ways that affirm the concerns of those who are primarily invested in using anti-trafficking efforts to as a way to protect vulnerable girls and women from sexual exploitation. Likewise, the legislative debates surrounding the TVPA provided a platform upon which conservative achieved a variety of political goals, including attacking their political opponents and restricting federal funds for reproductive healthcare and HIV/AIDS intervention (Bewley 2014; Crago 2003; Soderland 2005; Weitzer 2005 and 2010). This chapter builds previous scholarship of this history and extends it. It claims that just evangelical were pivotal to the formation of the TVPA, so to was the TVPA instrumental to the formation of the evangelical political bloc. Examining interviews with those who were involved in this process, this chapter demonstrates how evangelical activists leveraged



the TVPA to recover their credibility and reconstitute and reinvigorate a political demographic who had been alienated by the divisive approach of the so-called “family values” movement of the 1980s and 1990s.

Scholars have elsewhere analyzed parallels between evangelical anti-sex trafficking rhetoric and conservative evangelical discourse from the late twentieth century. However, this project identifies a different trajectory. It argues that the contemporary evangelical anti-trafficking movement extends the efforts of conservative faith groups to secure religious freedoms protections. Just as conservative Christian educational academies sought to leverage their protected status to defend their racial segregation policies after WWII, contemporary activists have used Charitable Choice provisions to push for federal investment in Christian NGOs that provide services for individuals who are identified as victims of human trafficking. This specific historical trajectory likewise helps illuminate the origins of the way that much evangelical anti-trafficking configures race. As discussed in Chapter 2, religious activists who equivocate sex trafficking with “modern day slavery” and who identify themselves as “modern day abolitionists,” co-opt civil rights discourse in ways that promote the interests of suburban women and girls of European descent and that obscure the ways that discrimination enables exploitation.

This chapter then analyzes a specific example of federal investment in faith-based social service providers, specifically by resuming the discussion of the Michigan Joint Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (JATT). To do so it first summarizes the federal administrative apparatus by which federal funds are channeled to private sector health and human service agencies to provide services for individuals who are identified as trafficking victims. This analysis, which examines publicly available budget information, provides an overview of the scope of federal

investment in this sector. Likewise, ethnographic research illuminates how this funding is used. In the case of JATT, federal funding is directly invested in the so-called secular division of a faith-based provider: a Department of Justice (DOJ) grant to the Salvation Army. In this case, DOJ funding likewise extends of the interests of proselytizing faith groups by creating a task force program in which church representatives and religious activists participate in an informal, but no less central way, influencing local programs, drafting policy, and determining how victims are served. This chapter concludes by identifying the potential benefits of faith-based involvement, as well as the risk it entails. Ethnographic observation of instances in which secular and faith-based providers attempt to collaborate on anti-human trafficking outreach shows how such collaborations can entrench ideological positions in ways that prevent outreach worker from accurately assessing local needs.

This chapter builds on and provides background for subsequent chapters in Section of one of this manuscript: race and scope of evangelical social justice (Chapter 2), entrepreneurial aspect of survivor leadership (Chapter 3), and stigma (chapter 4).

The present chapter examines the political economy and history of the anti-trafficking movement in order to make contributions to Public Policy by analyzing the rise of FBOs in the trafficking victim service sector as an example that illustrates the broader trend towards increasing privatization of health and human services more broadly. This chapter contributes to the Anthropology of Religion and to the study of Christianity in North America. Previous scholars have documented the history of evangelical involvement in the passage of the TVPA. This chapter builds on this scholarship and extends it arguing that the TVPA likewise invigorated evangelical Christianity. It argues emergence of the contemporary anti-trafficking movement represents a defining feature of modern-day evangelicalism in the United States, reflecting the

purview of contemporary evangelical social justice efforts and driving the moral priorities of this faith community. In particular, it analyzes historical and contemporary efforts to frame anti-sex trafficking efforts as part of a greater abolitionists with rhetorical and historical origins in the effort to end the Atlantic Slave Trade, this project examines a hitherto un-flagged impact of the evangelical anti-trafficking movement on defining the historic of American race relations; the reframing of the historical civil rights in the United States as an effort to advocate on behalf of sexually vulnerable women and girls.

The practice of coupling law enforcement action that targets (male) consumers with so-called “rescue” and rehabilitation efforts for those who sell sexual services (largely women) is a persistent feature of contemporary anti-trafficking intervention policy (Bernstein 2007). This carceral feminist approach to anti-sex trafficking law enforcement, which frames women as victims vis-a-vis male perpetrators, marks a dramatic departure from previous centuries of prostitution regulation. The historical analysis in this chapter thus engages with Talal Asad’s secularization hypothesis “In order for a society to be modern it has to be secular, and for it to be secular it has to relegate religion to non-political spaces because that arrangement is essential to modern society” (Asad 2003, 182). This legacy also represents an political expression of the “Protestant reformation of the sex-gender system,” which Tracey Fessenden argues has enabled white middle-class “women and men to protect their interests, insofar as they were shared, and to frame the issues that divided them in ways that did not dislodge the hegemony of the white Protestant middle class over members of other religions, races, and classes,” (Fessenden 2000, 471-472). The Protestant reformation of the sex-gender system emergence of the Protestant woman sphere as anti-Catholic (anti-nun) and anti-prostitute. Protestant woman comes to stand in for patriotic feminine virtue on the bases of and in opposition to Catholic women and

prostitutes. This allows protestant women to exert control over other women and other classes (insofar as protestant women's interests align with interests of protestant men). Fessenden links Protestantism (anti-Catholicism), white women, and anti-prostitution with protection of the political speech and political interests of evangelicals in the United States. This emphasis on the protection of white women and girls can also be observed in the history of anti-vice movements in the early twentieth century. As anti-trafficking historian Brian Donovan observes, White slavery narratives and anti-vice activism performed the ideological work necessary for gender and racial formation. They clarified the boundaries of racial categories and allowed native-born whites to speak of a collective "us" as opposed to a "them." Crusades against white slavery helped build racial hierarchies by emphasizing moral and sexual differences between Anglo-Saxons or native-born whites on one hand and new European immigrants, Chinese, and African Americans on the other. Reformers used white slavery stories to make arguments about the moral character and proper distance between racial groups. (Donovan 2000)

The present project extends the scholarly discussion of the importance of anti-vice campaigns to American Protestantism by focusing on a contemporary iteration of religiously motivated anti-prostitution activity. Specifically, it focuses on para-church anti-sex trafficking activity.

### **Faith-Based Organizations**

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) have long impacted public health and welfare in the United States by providing a significant component of the social safety net (Cnaan 2000; Kramer 2005). Congregations and service organizations with religious roots provide emergency food, shelter, and other assistance to individuals in need. Churches offer a large pool of volunteers who are motivated by contemporary theologies of direct service outreach (Elisha 2011). Organized

lobbying by religious organizations has surged since 1970 (Pew 2012, 24-26). Federal tax law privileges religiously motivated giving.<sup>1</sup> All of this has contributed to the profound expansion of the now \$15.2 billion Christian non-profit sector in the United States (see figure CITE).

According to publicly available federal data for tax-exempt 501(c)3 organizations, from 2006 to 2016 the faith-based organization (FBO) sector significantly outpaced growth within the non-profit sector overall. During this time, the total number of tax-exempt entities categorized as “Christian” by the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) increased by 43.87%. This compares to 9.49% growth of the nonprofit sector overall. Moreover, during this ten-year period, the total combined inflation-adjusted assets of Christian non-profits increased by 76.38% (vs. 28% for non-profits overall). Information used to calculate these trends was gathered from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) and is listed in the figure below.

**Figure 7. Estimated Revenue & Assets of U.S. Anti-Human Trafficking NGOs: Changes in the number of tax-exempt non-profit organizations registered in the United States and their total assets from (2006-16)**

Changes in the number of tax-exempt non-profit organizations registered in the United States and their total assets from 2006 to 2016, listed by the NTEE code categories that anti-trafficking organizations most commonly used. (There is no anti-human trafficking specific NTEE code.)

NTEE Codes	2016	2006		2016		Net Change 2006 to 2016		
	Percentage of Anti-Trafficking Organizations Categorized by this NTEE Code	Number of Organizations Registered	Total Reported Assets	Number Registered Organizations	Total Reported Assets	Change in Number Registered Organizations	Increase in Assets	Increase in Assets - Inflation Adjusted
<b>ALL CODES/CATEGORIES (all non-profit organizations)</b>	<b>100%</b>	1,444,322	\$3,579,113,510,141	1,581,445	\$5,479,586,019,266	9.49%	53.10%	28.08%
<b>I - Crime &amp; Legal Related (All)</b>	<b>18%</b>	20,964	\$7,521,615,582	21,132	\$10,597,320,063	0.80%	40.89%	17.87%
I70 - Protection Against Abuse	10%	692	\$81,135,672	706	\$132,951,206	2.02%	63.86%	37.09%
I73 - Sexual Abuse Prevention	8%	149	\$27,684,544	248	\$62,466,996	66.44%	125.64%	88.77%
<b>P - Human Services (All)</b>	<b>18%</b>	89,173	\$140,629,211,276	99,665	\$197,435,120,901	11.77%	40.39%	17.46%
P20 - Human Service Organization	11%	11,325	\$11,194,526,494	20,061	\$16,921,832,455	77.14%	51.16%	26.46%
P43 - Family Violence Shelters	2%	1207	\$1,003,409,608	1145	\$1,456,385,436	-5.14%	45.14%	21.43%
P50 - Personal Social Services	1%	1,886	\$260,712,664	2,785	\$640,260,307	47.67%	145.58%	105.46%
P62 - Victims Services	2%	383	\$130,380,880	600	\$238,679,967	56.66%	83.06%	53.15%
P80 - Centers to Support the Independence of Specific Populations	2%	5,241	\$3,378,734,169	5,616	\$5,255,635,240	7.16%	55.55%	30.13%
<b>X - Religion Related (All)</b>	<b>10%</b>	197,254	\$26,391,462,236	282,008	\$41,188,044,607	42.97%	56.07%	30.57%
X01 - Religion Related Alliances & Advocacy	1%	57	\$9,806,857	133	\$35,326,801	133.33%	260.23%	201.37%
X20 - Christianity	9%	90,577	\$7,222,841,792	130,313	\$15,227,924,385	43.87%	110.83%	76.38%
Other NTEE Codes	54%	1,136,931	\$3,404,571,221,047	1,178,640	\$5,230,365,533,695	3.67%	53.63%	28.53%
<b>Weighted Averages</b>								
NTEE Code I	17.87	5						
NTEE Code P	17.46	25						
NTEE Code X	30.57	70						
	26.6575							

The NCCS, which tracks trends within the domestic non-profit sector, categorizes tax-exempt according to the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE). NTEE codes are used by the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) as well as non-governmental charity trackers such as the national Guidestar database.<sup>2</sup> As of July 2017, the NTEE did not include a trafficking-specific code. Nonetheless, NCCS data provides clues about the size and scope of FBOs in the anti-trafficking movement. From 2017-18, I conducted a statewide survey of anti-human trafficking organizations in the state of Michigan (*see* Appendix A). Based on a review of IRS filing documents for participants in that study, anti-trafficking organizations are predominately listed under the following three NTEE categories: “Crime & Legal Related” (especially “Protection Against Abuse” and “Sexual Abuse Prevention”), “Human Services” (especially “Human Service Organizations,” “Family Violence Shelters,” “Personal Social Services,” “Victim Services,” and “Centers to Support the Independence of Specific Populations”), and “Religion Related” (especially “Religion Related Alliances & Advocacy” and “Christianity”). The figure above includes national data gathered for these NTEE codes as of July 2017.

The information for the NTEE categories that are most often associated with organizations that engage in anti-human trafficking work reveals multiple relevant trends. For example, Family Violence Shelters (P43)—organizations with established capacity to serve individuals who have experience sexual abuse, gender-based violence, and financial precarity— decreased in number from 2016 to 2016: -5.17%. Likewise, their assets grew at a rate below that of the non-profit sector overall: 21.43% vs. 28.08%. However, during this same period, the number and collective assets of organizations that were designated as providing Victim Services (P62) grew by more than half.

Most striking was growth among Religion Related Alliances and Advocacy organizations (X01). This NTEE category includes religiously motivated government lobbying organizations, as well as religiously affiliated institutions such as schools and hospitals, and is dominated by Christian institutions in particular: 47% (Pew 2012, 32, 34). From 2016 to 2016, such groups more doubled in number and their collective assets increased by 201% (adjusted for inflation). While such calculations merit further analysis that beyond the scope of the current manuscript, they broadly suggest that there has been an overall shift in the non-profit sector towards FBOs overall. Of particular relevance to the present discussion, NTEE data suggests that groups who are organizing new trafficking-focused charitable entities may be distancing themselves from shelters for survivors of abuse and instead framing their mission as primarily focused on serving “victims” of crimes or in terms of a religious mission. Likewise, calculating trends in the source of funds for anti-trafficking NGOs is beyond the scope of the present manuscript. Instead, the present analysis focusing specifically on how federal investment has driven growth within the non-profit human trafficking victim services sector.

Two legal shifts in particular have enabled this phenomenon. Funding provisions established by the 2000 TVPA and its subsequent revisions have led to federal investment in professional non-profit organizations who partner with law enforcement to provide services to trafficking victims (Musto 2008; Spangenberg 2003). At the same time, federal and state governments have eased restrictions on tax-exempt charitable organizations, reducing the liability of non-profit boards and making it easier for private individuals to establish and operate nonprofit charities.<sup>3</sup> Thus, this project focuses on federal investment in FBOs specifically. In doing so this analysis seeks to flesh previous scholars’ claims that churches and religiously



motivated donors and volunteers have played significant role in the anti-trafficking movement in the United States (Zimmerman 2011; Campbell and Zimmerman 2014).

In order to understand the scope and significance of FBO involvement in the anti-trafficking movement within the United States, it is important to first understand the historical development of federal policies that allow federal funds to be invested in faith-based organizations.

#### U.S. Anti-Trafficking Law Reflects the Priorities of Evangelical Christian

The initial passage of the TVPA reflected a bi-partisan effort. The law had been the product of nearly a decade of legislative work under the Clinton administration, as well as Hillary Clinton who served as the titular head of the President's Interagency Council on Women (DeStefano 2007; Gallagher 2008, 795). However, in the late 1990s the TVPA also symbolized the successful outcome of lobbying from Republican legislators and faith-based organizations (Berman 2005, 273). For evangelical Christians in particular, the passage of the TVPA represented a moral victory as well as political one, allowing them to consolidate political capital by forging new humanitarian and feminist alliances in order to promote conservative sexual values.

The language of the TVPA prioritizes the sexual exploitation of women and children over other forms of human trafficking and forced labor. While the TVPA broadly defined human trafficking as “a crime that involves exploiting a person for labor, services, or commercial sex,” (US DOJ 2015), it principally distinguishes between two categories of human trafficking; “sex trafficking” and “labor trafficking,” with the latter encompassing all other forms of human trafficking and coerced labor.<sup>4</sup> The particular emphasis that the TVPA language places on sex trafficking parallels distinctions made in the United States criminal code. Federal criminal codes

elevate sexual assault and violations of personal freedom as particularly egregious among the various bodily and psychological harms that trafficking victims may suffer, akin only to death.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, international anti-human trafficking law makes no such distinction. The 2000 U.N. Protocol to “Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children” includes “the exploitation of the prostitution others” and “other forms of sexual exploitation” as only two of many forms in which human trafficking can manifest.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, the U.N. Protocol does not distinguish sex trafficking as a distinct crime in the way that trafficking parsed in the TVPA.

The differences between the way that the TVPA and the U.N. Protocol defined human trafficking with regard to questions of sex and labor engendered significant debate among anti-trafficking activists. Initially, religious conservatives and anti-prostitution feminists objected to the language of the U.N. Protocol on ideological grounds. By grouping sex trafficking within the broader category of labor trafficking, they argue, the U.N. Protocol endorsed the notion that prostitution was a legitimate form of labor (Berman 2005; Carnes 2000; Chapkis 2003; Chuang 2010; Doezema 2010; McReynolds 2008). In contrast, others make the case that the most effective way to reduce sex trafficking is to expand human and labor right rights protections for sex workers themselves (for example see Doezema 2001; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998 also see Amnesty 2014, 2016).<sup>7</sup> In the late 1990s, some feminist groups were so adamant in their demands to add language to the U.N. protocol that would criminalize prostitution that they nearly compromised its passage (DeStefano 2007, 108). Ultimately, anti-prostitution feminists were unsuccessful in achieving their abolitionist goals through the U.N. Protocol. However, domestically, abolitionist language prevailed. This occurred in large part due to the efforts of religious conservatives who took up the cause to abolish prostitution as a moral campaign.

Founded in 1942, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) led the ecumenical effort that lobbied heavily for the TVPA at the turn of the twenty-first century. In particular, Richard Cizik was instrumental in the TVPA effort. Cizik worked for the NAE from 1998 to 2008. In a 2006 interview, Cizik, who had been then ascended to the post vice president of government affairs for the NAE explained that the coalition building effort behind the TVPA represented a new approach to evangelical lobbying. Specifically, Cizik described his “religious crusade” to end sex trafficking as an extension of the moral stance that characterized previous evangelical campaigns to promote laws that reflected conservative views on sexuality (Cizik in Shapiro 2006). Previous evangelical leaders, such as Jerry Falwell had framed conservative opposition to gay rights and abortion in the 1980s and 1990s as a militant defense of Christian “culture” and “family values” (for example see Harding 2001; Kintz 1997; Stein 2001). In contrast, Cizik claimed that the focus on sex trafficking reflected a new approach that emphasized coalition-building efforts and prioritized international humanitarian concerns. According to Cizik, “Second-generational leaders—people my age—saw the initiatives of the 1980s crash and burn and decided we had to do something differently,” (Cizik in Shapiro 2006). Do something different they did.

In the late 1990s, the NAE convened tens of thousands of evangelical churches and multiple millions of individual members by outlining the central tenants of evangelicalism and by lobbying for evangelical-supported legislation. Under Cizik’s leadership, they also reached out to new forge new alliances with conservative interfaith leaders and second wave feminists who sought to leverage anti-trafficking policies in order to abolish sex work. For Cizik, the evangelical push for anti-trafficking policy was driven as much by a theological commitment to sexual integrity as it was by political pragmatism. As Cizik told New York Times columnist

Nicholaus Kristof in 2002: “The American electorate was split right down the middle on these cultural wars, and nobody was going to win them.” In contrast, our international efforts, are “going gangbusters.” In Cizik’s view, federal anti-trafficking policy provided evangelicals with the platform on which they were able to garner the respect of mainstream policy makers. As Czik told Kristof: [Evangelicals] have been internationally involved for 100 years, but we have never been successful before on Capitol Hill,” (Cizik in Kristof 2002).

According to scholars, the coalition of feminist and religious actors that lobbied for the inclusion of abolitionists language in the TVPA included a broad, and in some cases, unexpected roster of participants (Berman 2005, 273; Block 2004; Shapiro 2006). Further, scholars observe that this anti-trafficking coalition, and the anti-trafficking movement broadly, has provided new opportunities for retired conservative officials to re-engage politically (Mon 2006). The initial lobbying effort convened prominent evangelicals such as Chuck Colson (defamed former Special Counsel to President Nixon who was subsequently ‘born-again), Richard Land (Southern Baptist Convention), the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the International Justice Mission (IJM), and the Family Research Council, as well as conservative Jewish leaders Michael Horowitz (the Hudson Institute) and representatives from B’nai B’rith, a security-focused Jewish service organization that promotes U.S.-Israeli alliances. Additionally, the coalition also included prominent abolitionists including feminist icon Gloria Steinem, representatives from the National Organization for Women (NOW) and conservative feminist voices from the Concerned Women for America (CWA), and Catholics for a Free Choice (among others).

In contrast to the exclusionary rhetoric characterized right-wing Christian discourse of the previous decade, TVPA lobbying efforts provided a platform on which evangelicals successfully re-branded themselves as a force for international social justice. In a 2008 interview

with the leading evangelical magazine Christianity Today, then Senior Director for Global Projects on Trafficking in Persons at the United States Department of State Laura Lederer described the period leading up to and immediately following the passage of the TVPA.

Recalling this period, Senior Director Lederer praised “the church,” saying:

The church has played a key role in caring for survivors and setting up shelters worldwide. And without faith-based organizations' strong stance, we wouldn't have been able to withstand the intense ideological onslaught from human-rights groups in this country who wanted to legalize prostitution as we developed trafficking laws. While mainstream human-rights groups neglected human trafficking for years, the church really carried the water on this important issue. I'm convinced faith-based communities all around the world are the only ones qualified to provide long-term care for trafficking survivors. It's the area of biggest need concerning sex trafficking, and I think it's a perfect area for the church to take leadership. (Courtney and Lederer 2008)

When Lederer made this statement, she did so as senior official in the United States Department of State who had been instrumental in drafting the TVPA since the late 1990s, first serving under the Clinton administration. By criticizing those who sought to “legalize prostitution,” Lederer endorsed the idea that the most effective way to reduce human trafficking is to abolish prostitution. Moreover, by characterizing “human rights groups” specifically as threat to anti-trafficking policy, Lederer acknowledged the ideological convergence of second wave feminist and conservative religious views on prostitution in both the language of the TVPA but its later implementation. Moreover, by asserting her conviction that “faith-based communities” represent the “only” qualified programs to provide care services for trafficking victims, Leder affirmed a long-standing belief within the evangelical community that therapeutic interventions for survivors of sexual exploitation are most successful when they are paired with spiritual ones.

Despite widespread support for FBO involvement at the federal level, anti-trafficking critics take issue with the tendency for anti-trafficking officials to privilege religious

conservatives. In particular, anti-trafficking scholars point out that the TVPA, and subsequent related policies, have contributed to a situation in which federal anti-trafficking funds are invested in FBOS and, moreover, that such groups are now invested with sanctioning power (Block 2004). This has led many to question the political and moral motivations behind FBO involvement in this process.

Legal historians observe that conservative pundits leveraged the debates over the TVPA language in the late 1990s in order to issue targeted partisan attacks on democratic politicians, such as Hillary Clinton, as well as progressive organizations, including Planned Parenthood (Bewley 2014; Chuang 2010, 1677-1678 and note 87). For example, Catholic reporter Jennifer Block explains that one early Republican-sponsored proposed version of the TVPA included language that “focused entirely on the sexual exploitation of women and girls” and omitted references to labor trafficking or the forced labor of males (sexual or otherwise). According to Block, “When human rights groups and the Clintons—Hillary in particular—opposed that language for the U.S. bill as well as the U.N. protocol, which was being drafted at the same time, they were derided as ‘promoting prostitution’,” (Block 2004).

The ideological emphasis placed on sex trafficking of women and girls to the exclusion of other factors that contribute to exploitation has become a topic of debate within the evangelical community as well as Brian McLaren explained to Bernstein. McLaren, whom Bernstein describes as “a progressive evangelical author and activist,” lamented this state of affairs: “It’s disturbing that nonprofits can raise money to fight sex trafficking in Cambodia but it’s much harder to raise awareness about bad trade policies in the U.S. that keep Cambodia poor so that it needs sex trafficking,” (McLaren in Bernstein 2010, 49). Yet, despite such criticisms, the abolitionist approach to anti-trafficking policy, which emphasizes human trafficking as a

crime that primarily involves the sexual exploitation of women and girls, has flourished in federal anti-trafficking policy.

Critics have also objected to the way that the TVPA has been used to promote policies that specifically reflect the political priorities of North American religious conservatives. For example, TVPA funding guidelines have been leveraged to restrict international aid agencies that provide reproductive and HIV/AIDS prevention services (Bewley 2014; Crago 2003; Soderland 2005; Weitzer 2005 and 2010).

For the purposes of this manuscript, the ideological distinctions crystallized in the TVPA are relevant due to their religious origins, which have persistent impacts. Although the TVPA does not explicitly reference religion, by participating in their passage, North American evangelicals achieved a legislative agenda that reflected a variety of conservative concerns, including prioritizing sex trafficking (especially the trafficking of women and girls) over other forms of human trafficking and by linking anti-trafficking efforts to efforts to curtail prostitution, as well as access to reproductive healthcare services. Moreover, by focusing on the sexual integrity of women and girls, the most urgent concerns of trafficking law, the TVPA codified the anxieties of conservative religious actors and effectively dis-embedded “slavery” from historical contexts and structural conditions, the racial implications of which are discussed in further detail later in this manuscript. For religious conservatives, the passage of the TVPA also represented an ecumenical effort through which evangelical Christians in the United States sought to reassert their moral authority in the civic sphere by establishing political alliances with inter-faith leaders and secular feminists around their shared objection to prostitution. It also offered a platform for evangelicals to consolidate political capital, shape U.S. foreign policy, and to drive federal funding towards faith-based programs that are specifically dedicated to establishing dominant narratives about

human trafficking (i.e. “raising awareness”) and to provide therapeutic services for victims and survivors. In this way, the religious roots of the TVPA, as well as the continued participation of religious actors in anti-human trafficking law enforcement and victims services shape the types of individuals who count as trafficking victims, what services victims receive, on what grounds, and the kinds of organizations that support victim recovery.

### **Federal Funding for Faith-Based Service Providers**

Public-private partnerships are a core feature of the TVPA victim service provisions. The initial language of the TVPA itself, which specified provisions for funding for the rehabilitation and care of individuals who have been victims of this crime, did not specifically identify non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as recipients of these funds. Rather, this model for funding TVPA victim services coincided with the formation of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI). Established by President George W. Bush in 2001, the OFBCI was an executive order that leveraged Charitable Choice provisions in order to increase faith-based group’s access to federal grant funds for health and human services, thus satisfying the concerns of religious conservatives and neoliberal privatization hawks alike (Daly 2006). The OFBCI was subsequently renewed by Obama and Trump and continues today as the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative (FOI). Initially, the OFBCI represented a significant source of TVPA provisioned victim service funds in the United. From 2000 to 2001, the total amount of congressional appropriations for TVPA victim services was evenly divided between the OFBCI and the entire Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) itself (see US House of Representatives and Gilman 1999, Sec. 13).



In a 2007 speech to members of the OFBCI, Mark P. Lagon, then Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons described the vast international scope of federal investment in the private sector. According to Lagon, From FY 2001 to FY 2006, the United States federal government provided approximately \$450 million for anti-human trafficking programs, including \$50 million through the OFBCI (Lagon 2007). In FY 2006 alone, this included the awarding of approximately \$73 million on 154 programs in about 70 countries. Additionally, from Domestically, from 2001 to 2003, the Bush administration directly allocated \$35 million in grants to “faith-based and community groups” specifically to provide services for the care and rehabilitation of trafficking victims through the OFBCI (Bush 2004). FY 2001 to FY 2011, HHS awarded approximately \$57 million to non-governmental victim service providers (Sheldon 2011). In FY 2018, at least \$55.9 million, or 83% of which of DOJ anti-trafficking funding was awarded to NGO services providers in order to establish new victim service programs and enhance existing ones (DOJ 2017). These grant programs initially entailed the provision multiple small-scale grants to fund street outreach, victim services, public awareness projects, and the national human trafficking telephone hotline telephone number (now known as Polaris) (from 2001 to 2006).

While federal anti-trafficking grants are not limited to FBOs, federal anti-trafficking officials have consistently prioritized their involvement, especially with regard to the provision of care within the United States. Initially, federal funds for domestic trafficking victim services were allocated to two faith-based groups specifically: Lutheran Social Services (LSS) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) (Clawson *et al* 2003, 7). By 2001, LSS and USCCB had long been recipients of funds through the federal Unaccompanied Refugee/Entrant Minors (UR/EM) program and thus were identified as having the organizational

capacity to meet the needs of trafficking victims specifically (Sheldon 2011). In this way, federal investment in FBO anti-trafficking groups reflects a continuation of existing mechanisms for funding services to vulnerable individuals who are foreign residents within the United States. However, subsequent government action reveals a strong motivation to prioritize funding to FBOs in this domain.

In 2007, Director Lagon, who had previously played a role in the final drafting of the TVPA in 2000 when he worked for noted conservative and North Carolina Senator Jessie Helms, renewed the State Department's commitment to working with faith leaders to house and care for individuals who had been identified as victims of human trafficking. Speaking at the "Compassion in Action Roundtable," a White House sponsored event for anti-trafficking NGOs, Director Lagon framed the fight against human trafficking in explicitly moral terms, Lagon asserting that: "Human traffickers prey on the vulnerable, regardless of nationality, gender or age. It is not just poverty and desperation, but the trafficker's evil, which causes this problem," (Lagon 2007). Lagon then renewed his office's commitment to working closely with spiritual leaders. Noting the "familiar" faces and political "allies" in the crowd, Lagon assured them: At the heart of U.S. government efforts to end human trafficking is a commitment to human dignity--a desire to not only rescue, but restore. Our partners in the faith-based and NGO community are well-equipped to do this and we in government have more to learn from them. (Lagon 2007).

Lagon then went on to call out faith leaders in particular, alerting them to a federal seminar specifically designed for "faith-based NGOs" whereat leaders from such groups could "share best practices and lessons learned" and strategize best practices for mobilizing those in the NGO community to engage in anti-trafficking work. No mere rhetoric, Lagon's comments

reflected a broader commitment within the federal government to investing faith based organizations with the authority to care for trafficking victims, including significant financial investment.

At the time Lagon spoke, the Department of Health and Human Services has recently revamped its scheme for funding services for trafficking victims. In 2006, HHS shifted from a direct model, in which the Department awarded funds directly to NGOs that provided services to trafficking victims, to one that involved a general contractor who would select service providers and administer HHS funds to them on the Department's behalf. HHS awarded this first general contract to USCCB. HHS administrators selected USCCB as the master contractor despite the group's multiple disclosures that doing so would preclude HHS funds from being used for comprehensive reproductive services. In a statement to HHS, USCCB stated that, due to the group's religious beliefs, if selected as the general contractor, it would require that their subcontractors "not provide or refer abortion services or contraceptive materials for our clients pursuant to this contract" (see USCCB in *ACLU of Ma vv. Sebelius* 2012). In 2007 HHS renewed its contract with the UCSSB. From 2006 to 2011, HHS awarded more than \$13 million to UCSSB, or \$2.5 million to \$4 million annually, in order to fund organizations that provided direct services to trafficking victims under the TVPA.

HHS' selection of USCCB as the master contractor to administer funds sparked outrage among those within the anti-trafficking community who argued that doing so effectively barred victims of commercial sexual exploitation from accessing comprehensive reproductive healthcare. In 2006 the ACLU of Massachusetts filed suit against HHS on the grounds that the Department had violated the federal government's anti-establishment clause (see *ACLU v. Sebelius* 2012; *ACLU v. USCCB* 2013, 50). In 2012, a federal court issued a ruling in favor the

ACLU and the case was later dismissed on appeal in 2013 as USCCB's contract with HHS had expired by that time. However, in the wake of the ACLU suit, federal legislation was enacted to establish a system of payments for per capita services and multiple grants wherein priority was given to grantees that could provide:

[A] victims referral to medical providers who can provide or refer for provision of treatment for sexually transmitted infections, family planning services and the full range of legally permissible gynecological and obstetric care, including but not limited to exams, tests, and pre-natal services and non-directive health-related counseling. (Bewley 2014; Desmond 2011; Sheldon 2011)

The change sparked widespread backlash among conservative lawmakers, including many who sought to block passage of the 2011 TVPA reauthorization on religious liberty grounds (Bewley 2014, 246-250). In 2011, George Sheldon, then HHS Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families sought to explain the medical necessity behind HHS' policy change, while also attempting to ameliorate concerns of conservative lawmakers who regarded the shift as state encroachment on religious freedom. Testifying before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Sheldon assured lawmakers that the new HHS policy, and its sub-contract structure for administering grant funds, would effectively have little impact on the status quo. As Sheldon testified,

Organizations that do not provide information and referrals for family planning services or the full range of legally permissible obstetric and gynecological care *can still receive federal funds* under the anti-trafficking case management program and actively participate in providing case management services to the victims. HHS did not establish a preference for grantees that would require each individual subgrantees to provide referrals for family planning and the full range of legally permissible gynecological and obstetric care. To the contrary, one anti-trafficking case management program grantee proposed in its application an approach that would accommodate subgrantees' teachings and beliefs by dividing up responsibility for different case management services ... The [new master contractors] have now entered into sub-grant arrangements with many of the same organizations that previously provided services through sub-contractor relationships with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which had received

the 2006-2011 TVPA contract from HHS. These subgrantees include faith-based organizations and, more specifically, entities affiliated with the Catholic Church. (Sheldon 2011 *emphasis added*)

According to Sheldon, while providing the full range of contraceptive options to trafficking victims was vital to support the mental and physical health of trafficking victims, especially those that were victims of sexual assault, HHS has effectively done so in a way that would preserve the prominence of faith based service providers in this domain (and Catholic providers specifically) by accommodating their “teachings and beliefs.” In this way, HHS sought to address legitimate concerns raised in the litigation involving USCCB while at the same time ameliorating concerns of religious leaders that doing so infringed upon their religious freedoms. For political leaders with the conservative religious community, anti-trafficking policy has long been viewed a key front on the fight for religious liberty. Michael Horowitz is a neo-conservative policy analyst with the Washington D.C.-based Hudson Institute who played a prominent role in convening the conservative coalition that initially lobbied for the TVPA in the late 1990s. According to Horowitz, the TVPA was an extension of an effort to shape U.S. foreign policy that began with the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, which places the “promoting religious freedom as a core objective of U.S. foreign policy.” According to Horowitz, “I just knew that issue number two was going to be the trafficking issue,” (Horowitz in Block 2004). In this way, for conservatives, the TVPA represented a moral victory as well as a multi-faceted political one, which cemented conservative interfaith political alliances that first emerged within the context of the religious liberty debates in the 1990s. Federal concern for balancing the needs of trafficking victims with the rights of faith communities persists in recent anti-trafficking legislation.

The 2018-19 reauthorization of the TVPA established the “Public-Private Partnership Advisory Council to End Human Trafficking.” Advisory Council members are mandated work with the Federal Interagency Task Force in the Office for Trafficking in Persons (OTP) (S-1312 Sec. 7). While the law instructs that the Public-Private Advisory Council is to be comprised of individuals from the “non-profit” and “academic” sectors, executive action elsewhere suggests that FBOs will be prioritized in particular. In May 2018, the OFBCI was replaced by an executive order that established the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative (WHFOI). While the full text of the WHFOI order references faith based and community organizations (FBCOs), the removal of “community organizations” from the title signals that the program’s primary priority was to further the interests of religious social service providers specifically. Notably, the WHFOI order was signed just days after a previous executive order asserting that commitment of “the executive branch to vigorously enforce Federal law’s robust protections for religious freedoms,” (Trump 2017). This order, which was initially drafted in 2017 but signed in May 2018, was lauded by the president and religious conservatives as an effort to curtail the Johnson Amendment, long-standing legislation that limits the political lobbying efforts of tax-exempt religious entities in the United States (Gill and Kennedy 2018; Miller and Habenicht 2017). As such, it provides insights about how the intention of the WHFOI should be correctly understood.

The WHFOI order asserts that the service capacity of FBCOs “often exceeds that of government,” (Trump 2018 *italics added*). Particularly relevant to the present manuscript, the WHFOI order prioritized FBCOs access to federal funds by emphasizing the need for such groups “to compete on a level playing field for grants, contracts, programs, and other Federal funding opportunities.” Read together, these May 2018 executive orders signaled that the current

administration not only champions religious liberty (in theory) but also prioritizes the allocation of federal monies to faith-based social service providers specifically. All of which illuminates my previous observations working with state officials locally in Michigan.

### **DOJ Anti-Trafficking Funds and the Michigan JATT Task Force**

The passage of the TVPA led to a major expansion of anti-trafficking law enforcement within the United States. In particular, it greatly enhanced the statutory authority of the Department of Justice (DOJ) whose budget for special anti-trafficking investigations exceeded \$100 million in 2018.<sup>8</sup> Subsequent revisions to the TVPA, along with other related legislation, established new anti-trafficking initiatives, offices, and budget categories across the federal government, including within the departments of State, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development, and Homeland Security (DHS).<sup>9</sup> This also included the development of specialized interagency hubs such as the federal Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit (HTPU).

Established in 2007, the HTPU is a unit within the Department of Justice that coordinates anti-trafficking efforts within the DOJ as well as efforts among other federal agencies, such as the Homeland Security's Blue Campaign, the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (GTIP), and the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTP) at the Department of Labor (DOJ 2015). In addition to coordinating federal interagency anti-trafficking programs through the HPTU, the DOJ also coordinates anti-trafficking efforts at the state and local level. The Michigan Joint Anti-Human Taskforce (JATT) is one such DOJ task force.

Established in 2015, JATT was a DOJ-funded initiative in southeast Michigan the purpose of which is strengthen partnerships between private social service organizations and law

enforcement agencies in Oakland, Wayne, and Macomb counties. Initially, the DOJ funded JATT through a three-year \$5 million grant, jointly allocated to the Michigan State Police (MSP) and the Salvation Army Southeast Michigan Division. While initial DOJ funding provided \$900,000 to MSP to increase their capacity to investigate human trafficking crimes in the region, the bulk of the funds were directly awarded to the Salvation Army. Under the terms of the JATT grant, the Salvation Army allocated and distributed DOJ grant funding to sub-grantee agencies and evaluated how those funds were used. As one of many such entities within a vast national network of DOJ-administered anti-human trafficking programs, the JATT task force reflected the DOJ's dual mandate to prosecute crime and to support crime victims in the United States.

Variously described as “special initiatives,” “working groups,” and “task forces,” these DOJ programs are intended to enhance collaborations between federal, state, and local law enforcement and regional health and human service providers. From 2015-16, the DOJ provided \$38.5 million in grants to regional anti-human trafficking task forces, which coordinate efforts of local and state police, health and human service agencies, and various non-profit groups (Lerum *et al* 2012). Administered through local FBI field offices and, in some cases, through competitive grant programs, these interagency initiatives train law enforcement agencies to investigate human trafficking crimes and coordinate interagency human trafficking investigations. They also fund local NGO health and human services providers who provide after care for individuals who are identified by law enforcement as victims of those crimes, accounting for more than one third of total federal grants to victim services providers under the TVPA in 2017.

A review of DOJ reports indicates that from FY 2003 to FY 2017, the DOJ awarded 258 grants totaling more than \$150 million to tax-exempt NGOs to coordinate and provide services to



human trafficking victims (DOJ 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). This funding has rapidly increased over time. During this period, annual DOJ grant awards rose from \$1.6 million in 2003 to \$7.5 million in 2017.

According to information available through the federal government funding search site, from FY 2009 to FY 2018, the DOJ awarded a total of nearly \$143 million in grants to non-profit non-governmental victim services providers. In FY 2018 alone, the DOJ awarded \$57 million in grants to external groups and agencies for the purpose of combating human trafficking and providing services to trafficking victims.

Bearing in mind that individuals who are identified as victims of human trafficking under the TVPA are also entitled to receive benefits administered by government agencies outside the DOJ (i.e. food and cash assistance, supplemental housing, and healthcare through Medicaid), the DOJ human trafficking victim service grant program represents a significant per-client investment in private sector service providers. From 2015 to 2017, grant recipients reportedly served a total 17,547 victims, 9,724 of which were newly identified (US DOS 2018, 445). Thus, during this four-year period, the DOJ alone invested on average \$3,824.83 per victim to supplement tax-exempt non-governmental anti-human trafficking organizations. This includes grants to entities that provide immediate emergency care as well as those that provide long-term residential services.

In an interview, one Detroit-based caseworker working for one the JATT sub-grantees described how law enforcement interfaced with her agency following a human trafficking raid: Sometimes, they might give us a heads up to expect it. But once we get the call, we meet them on site. They say: “Hey, we’ve got such and such a girl, and she’s this or that age.” And we meet

them there and assess her immediate needs and take her where she needs to go. The important thing is we have to stay with her.

“What if she doesn’t want to go with you?”

“Well, most people don’t want to go into police custody so in that moment we are the better alternative. We go with her the hospital. We get her food, somewhere to sleep. But it depends. We file her [public assistance] applications. If she’s an adult, she can get a housing a subsidy. If she’s not staying with us, we have to pick her up and drive her to the doctor, to the court if she’s a witness. If we can’t do it, we find someone else who can.”

“What happens if there isn’t anywhere for her to go?”

“I’ve never seen that. Sometimes I have had to put someone in a hotel for a few nights. If she can’t stay [in our facility], we find someone else for her to go. But, no, I’ve never been a situation where I can’t find someone a bed. I might have to call around in the middle of the night, but I’ve always found a spot.”

This caseworker described multiple ways that NGO partners help the DOJ fulfill its mandate by coordinating immediate and long-term care for individuals who are identified as victims in human trafficking crimes. These partnerships are strengthened when investigating officers and service provider strengthens have prior relationships. Law enforcement officers can give providers a “heads up.” For their part, providers facilitate police interviews and court visits that aid in investigations. Social workers who are trained in trauma-centered care convey strategies to law enforcement officers about how to best work with vulnerable individuals. This has an immediate benefit to individuals in the immediate aftermath of crime. It also may contribute to broader policy changes. For example, in its most recent re-authorized version, the

2017 TVPA (S. 1312) removed the requirement that trafficking victims in the United States cooperate with law enforcement as a condition to receive access to shelter or restorative services (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(2)), a change celebrated by human rights advocates. Likewise, professional case managers understand the local landscape of care; what types of services are available, where, to whom and how to best access them. In this way interagency task forces facilitate the formation of extensive networks of local professionals to meet the needs of a diverse population of individuals in need. In the case of the JATT task force, these interagency groups also expand the referral network by inviting in new partners from the faith-based community.

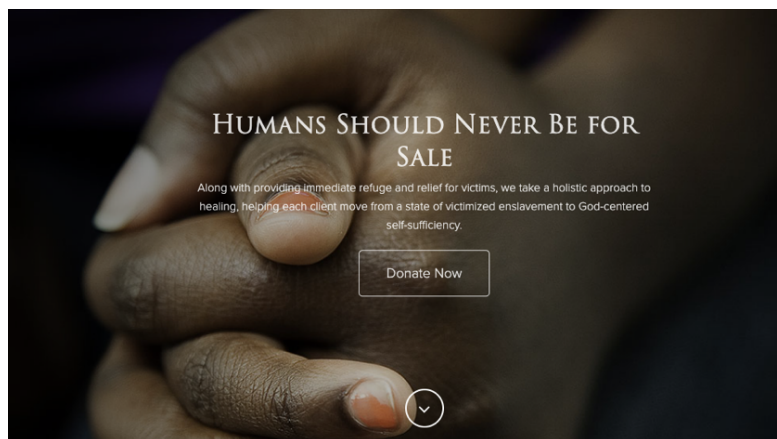
### **Religious Narratives of Care: ‘All they really need is Jesus’**

The JATT grant allocated more than \$4 million to the Salvation Army of Southeast Michigan to coordinate victim service activities for the task force. This included funding for a temporary grant administrator position. Based out of the regional Salvation Army headquarters just outside of Detroit, this individual oversaw the distribution of funds to victim service sub-grantees. In the initial JATT proposal, the Michigan State Police and the Salvation Army specified additional participants that included Detroit Police Department as well as a brief list of a of local health and human service providers who had a demonstrated capacity to serve trafficking victims. The Salvation Army administrator also acted as task force’s primary caseworker. In this role, the administrator coordinated service referrals for individuals whom law enforcement partners had identified as victims of human trafficking crimes.

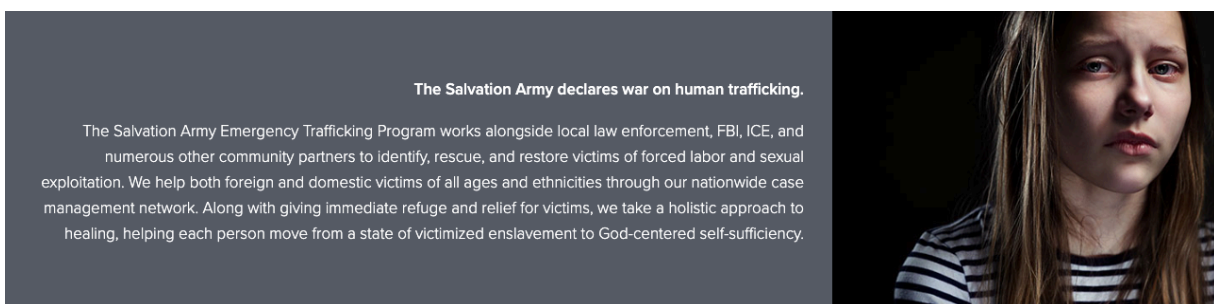
Since 2001, the Salvation Army has served as a primary partner with the federal government to provide services to trafficking victims under the provisions of the TVPA. An international Christian Church, the organization is actively engaged in missionization but also

manages numerous service programs for individuals in need. According to scholars, the Salvation Army is known for maintaining a relatively permeable boundary between its religious proselytizing and secular service efforts (see Cnaan and Boddie 2002, 225). The narratives they use to describe their anti-human trafficking work reflect this. As of July 2019, the Salvation Army website described its approach to trafficking victims services as a “holistic approach to healing [which helps] each person move from a state of victimized enslavement to God-centered self-sufficiency.”

**Figure 8. “Humans Should Never Be For Sale” (Salvation Army 2019)**



**Figure 9. "From Victimized Enslavement to God-centered Self-sufficiency" – the Salvation Army Emergency Trafficking Program (Salvation Army 2019)**



The images shown above appeared on the Salvation Army website on a page that summarizes the organization's anti-human trafficking efforts (Salvation Army 2019). Addressed to potential donors, the images accompany a textual narrative in which human trafficking is defined as an immediate public safety threat, an urgent spiritual crisis, and a call to action. The narrative content on the web page and the textual overlay in these images assert the Salvation Army's Christian credentials and anti-trafficking expertise by emphasizing the organization's law enforcement partnerships and the explicitly religious mission to help people move from "a state of victimized enslavement to God-centered self-sufficiency" (Figure 6). This representation mirrors broader evangelical narratives about anti-human trafficking intervention; strong support for criminal prosecution combined with protection for vulnerable young women that is intended to release them from physical and spiritual "enslavement" while also transitioning them off public assistance programs.

From 2016 to 2017, I observed JATT meetings and met individually with state officials and non-profit representatives who were involved in the task force. A practicing Christian herself, JATT's lead administrator told me that she had initially invited me to participate in the task force because she hoped that I would help her secure a spot as a volunteer with a local Christian outreach ministry. She explained that her volunteer application had been denied and asked if I might be able to "put in a good word" on her behalf. During our initial interview, I asked her how the Salvation Army's religious mission impacted its work with the Task Force. She explained that the Salvation Army's ability to procure this particular federal grant was attributed, in part, to the group's ability to frame the JATT proposal as an extension of the group's "spiritual mission" to end human trafficking as well as its historical collaborations with law enforcement going back to the Nineteenth Century (personal communication). However, she

assured me that terms of the JATT grant specified that the Salvation Army would strictly separate its task force work from the group's proselytizing efforts. "Imagine an absolute firewall," she said. "I have separate files. I can't even tell my boss about ongoing cases." However, in practice this "firewall" was more permeable than I had led to believe.

JATT leadership encouraged the participation of Christian anti-trafficking activists in multiple ways. Administrators invited Church donors and representatives from Christian anti-trafficking non-profits to attend JATT meetings. Here they observed best practices for facilitating interagency efforts and networked with federal and state anti-trafficking law enforcement. Christian activists also served the task force directly, including by coordinating a media campaign intended to "raise awareness" about human trafficking. They also spearheaded the task force's "end demand" efforts, acting as the group's liaison to Google to request that the tech company redirect search requests for child pornography, escort agencies, and violent sexual imagery to legal information about human trafficking crimes.

Involving faith-based partners to assist with JATT was, in part, transactional. Christian activists who volunteered their time to plan JATT initiatives helped alleviate the burden from already overworked representatives from other task force members. They also expanded the potential service referral network by providing insider knowledge about additional faith-based service agencies and shelters whose proselytizing activities and non-inclusive program policies would have otherwise precluded them from participating in JATT. This is especially relevant in Detroit where Christian volunteers conduct a significant amount of street-based outreach to trafficking victims. At the same time, however, the inclusion of faith-based activists in the JATT task force also raised concern.

In individual interviews, representatives from some JATT sub-grantees expressed caution about the involvement of faith-based volunteers. One law enforcement agent warned about a particular Christian anti-trafficking activist whose unorthodox approach to intervention possibly posed a public safety risk. Likewise, a service provider complained that faith-based activists had leveraged their relationships with task force in order to influence private donors. Specifically, she worried that such individuals were steering donors away from well-established multi-service providers in Detroit and instead towards newly opened Christian programs that had limited, if any, capacity to provide long-term care for trafficking victims. These specific criticisms were directed primarily at faith-based providers who lacked professional credentials. The presence of faith-based activists in the task force also dovetailed with the personal commitments of and human service professionals who injected their religious beliefs into task force business.

The structure of the JATT grant specified the formation of specific sub-committees dedicated to the task forces three-part mission: law enforcement, public outreach, and victim services. For its part, the victim services sub-committee was composed of representatives from JATT sub-grantee agencies in the health and human service sector. A relatively small group, they met regularly in a group of five to ten to facilitate service referrals and to troubleshoot challenges they encountered while serving survivors of human trafficking and sexual trauma.

At one such meeting, after an exhausting discussion of the various obstacles that prevent trafficking victims from reaching out to aid agencies, attendee threw up her hands in a gesture of frustration, effectively halting all conversation in the room. A police officer who was also a chaplain and licensed social worker, she helped coordinate the department's crime victim referral program. Banging her hands down on the table, she looked at me wide-eyed and exclaimed: "Well, we all know that what these girls really need is Jesus!" Startled, I scanned the room.

Others at the table nodded in agreement, encouraging her extemporaneous sermon. “We all need Jesus. M-hm. There is power in the church. What we need to do is tap into that power.”

“Power” in this case referred to a belief that prayer and spiritual transformation helps in the trauma recover process. However, it also described the powerful public influence of faith-based groups to raise public awareness, shape narratives, and to motivate action.

### **Conflicting Views of the Victim Service Landscape**

In the state of Michigan, broadly, religious groups play a central role in anti-human trafficking efforts. This includes churches and independent faith-based health and human services providers, as well as survivor-led anti-human trafficking humanitarian organizations that partner with legislators. In this context, religiously motivated anti-trafficking activists help draft and promote anti-trafficking legislation, consultant on the design of intervention and enforcement programs, and, in some instances, provide direct care for victims. Such groups enjoy maximum flexibility for how they conduct their outreach and intervention programs. Faith-based service providers who eschew public funding and instead rely on private donors are not subject to formal program evaluations in the same way as their secular counterparts. Likewise, under federal tax code, groups that register as churches receive special tax status, which makes them significantly less subject to financial scrutiny. They also receive religious freedom protections that alleviate them from having to comply with many anti-discrimination clauses. As these types of providers work alongside with their secular counterparts, they encounter different sets of professional and legal standards and different definitions about what counts human trafficking, who merits intervention, and what the intervention should be. At times, this new awareness may actually create conflict between service providers, further entrenching their



beliefs in ways that ultimately prevent people from accurately assessing community resources and accessing the full range of service interventions.

In interviews, faith-based anti-trafficking activists frequently told me that Detroit lacked adequate housing for trafficking victims. Groups who were working to establish new non-profits shelters stressed the need for housing in their fundraising campaigns. Volunteers from faith-based groups cited this oft-repeated mantra, lamenting that trafficking victims were “invisible” or “forgotten” by mainstream society. However, professional social services providers, such as social workers and attorneys, described a very different situation. When asked in interviews about the supposed lack of housing, they said that was not a problem they encountered. During the time I was conducting research for this project, at least two local shelters closed their programs for trafficking victims. In one instance, program capacity exceeded demand. When I casually shared this story with individuals I met at faith-based anti-trafficking events, their reactions varied from surprise to dismissal. Some expressed disbelief telling me that I must “be mistaken.” Likewise, when I suggested the names alternative victim programs that were not faith-based, some volunteers hesitated. Many seemed surprised to learn that there existed a network of women’s shelters and social service agencies in Detroit apart from the church.

At one point I facilitated a meeting between a Christian street-outreach program and a representative from the Ruth Ellis Center, a shelter for transgender youth in Detroit. Initially the ministry expressed delight at the connection. Previously, they referred individuals to an informal shelter run out of a private home. JJ’s house was a nominally Christian community for transgender individuals in Detroit who were attempting to transition away from sex work. Since JJs was not longer accepting new housemates, they ministry was now having to everyone to a large Christian rehabilitation center whose shelter policies mandated strict separation based a

client's sex as it was assigned at birth. As the ministry's told the REC representative: "I am so happy to know you. We meet so many [transgender individuals] on the street but we have nowhere appropriate for them to go. Now we have a place to send them!" Yet later, upon learning more about REC, the ministry reversed its position. REC, like many health and human service agencies, practices a "harm reduction" client service model. In the case of REC specifically, this policy discourages residents, but does require them, stop engaging in sex work as a pre-condition for participation. When I followed up with the ministry to facilitate a second meeting, they declined telling me that they refused to support a program that "furthers the exploitation" of already vulnerable individuals.

Strong sentiments like this one were outliers. However, they do echo the statements of some anti-trafficking policy makers who have claimed publicly that faith-based services providers are better equipped to provide care. Ethnographic research suggests that divergent narratives about the scope of available resources in Detroit stems from not only from differing ideas about what trafficking victims need, but also from the different ways that anti-trafficking professionals and lay volunteers experienced the social service landscape in Detroit. I experienced this first hand when I attempted facilitate a service referral.

While conducting outreach at a strip club in Detroit, a team of ministry volunteers identified a woman in distress; a dancer had tearfully told them that she wanted to "leave the club" but had "nowhere" to go. Normally, volunteers referred potential trafficking victims they met to a particular faith-based shelter and life skills program. However, as a non-homeless person who was not experiencing domestic violence, this individual did not meet that program's eligibility criteria. Nonetheless, the volunteers appeared urgently motivated to make a referral. While they recognized that she was not in imminent danger, they interpreted her emotional

display, combined with her request for help, as evidence that she was open to spiritual intervention and thus, they responded in kind.

I watched as the team turned to their cell phones, looking up the phone numbers for possible referral locations to no avail; the facilities they found listed online had stopped answering their phones for the night. Observing the situation escalate, I decided to call a personal contact; a staff member at a women's shelter who worked with trafficking victims and whom I knew well enough to risk waking on a weeknight.

Speaking by phone, my contact told me that "Yes," she could find a bed. She said that despite the later hour "it wouldn't be a problem" because she would "just call their internal phone line." She then me asked a series of questions, which I relayed to the rest of the group who answered them in turn.

"Does she need a ride?" my contact asked.

"No, she has a car," they answered.

"Can she drive herself to the shelter?"

"No," they said. "She says she doesn't want go to a shelter."

"Is she being threatened? Is she afraid that someone will hurt her if she leaves?"

"No," they explained, "She says that she doesn't want to work here anymore and she's ready to leave the life but can't find another job. Can we get her into a program that will help her do that?"

"Yes," my contact replied, "but not tonight."

My contact thanked me for calling, bid me goodnight, and hung up the phone. For their part, the volunteers turned to console the crying dancer, their sense of urgency only mildly diminished. In the following weeks I observed the volunteers discussing this dancer during Bible

study and praying for her. I also listened as they described their frustration with a “system” that seemed unwilling or unable to recognize this particular individual’s victimization. Later, the volunteers sought out this dancer when they returned to do outreach in the clubs. Eventually she accompanied one volunteer to church. This, I was told, was a certain sign of her transition “out of bondage” despite the fact that she continued to work as a dancer.

These ethnographic examples illustrate the different ways that volunteers from secular and faith-based groups experience the social service landscape. My telephone contact enjoyed access to a network of health and human service professionals, including some who would pick up the phone for her late night call. In contrast, the ministry volunteers had limited access to the local social service providers and relatively little knowledge about their eligibility criteria.

Secular and faith-based facilities alike must comply with licensing requirements, which include the need to specify which populations they serve. However, historically, most grant programs contain provisions that preclude religious organization for receiving their funds. Thus, faith-based facilities largely rely on compelling narratives in order inspire potential donors. Such narratives in turn shape faith-based activists’ ideas about who counts as a victim of exploitation in ways may conflict with professional standards for intervention. While my telephone contact sought to determine if this individual was experiencing human trafficking under the definition set forth in the TVPA’s victim services provisions, the ministry volunteers applied a much more expansive view of exploitation; namely, one that emphasized the need for a spiritual transformation, rather than a change in material circumstance or physical location.

## Notes to Chapter 5

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<sup>1</sup> The United States Internal Revenue Code allows churches (religious groups) and church-affiliated organizations to receive tax-deductible donations (see IRC 501(c)3). Unique among 501(c)3 tax-exempt entities, the IRC broadly exempts churches and church-affiliated organizations from federal financial oversight (see IRC Title 26, 26 USC 7611).

<sup>2</sup> Initially developed by the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) classification system is used by the United States (IRS) and non-governmental charitable transparency groups such as Guidestar, which publishes financial information about tax exempt organizations on the website: [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org). Guidestar's goal is to increase transparency in the charitable sector. Individual listings are often used by potential donors to vet the organizations to which they give. Information on Guidestar is largely self-reported. Organizations register with Guidestar by providing contact information, tax and financial data, and by self-selecting an NTEE code. While listed organizations can adjust some information on their Guidestar listings, they are required to provide up to date tax and asset information in order to receive a favorable Guidestar rating. Because 501(c)3 tax filings (I-990s) are part of the record, tax information for a particular organization can also be added by Guidestar directly (Jones 2019; also see [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)).

<sup>3</sup> For example, in 2014, the IRS introduced the 1023EZ short form, which shortened the 501(c)3 application from thirty-two to two pages, lowered application fees, and reduced the need for many groups to employ professional assistance from attorneys or CPAs. In Michigan, amendments to the Non-profit corporations act in 2015 allow organizations to indemnify their board members from all liability save gross negligence.

<sup>4</sup> The TVPA defines human trafficking as a crime that can take on one of two forms. The first is "sex trafficking," which is defined as a crime "in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age (22 U.S.C. § 7102(9))," (US DOJ 2015). The second form of human trafficking described is "labor trafficking," defined as: "The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. (22 U.S.C. § 7102(9))," (US DOJ 2015). This distinction between labor trafficking and sex trafficking primarily affects the criteria for identifying victims of human trafficking, rather than delineating human trafficking crimes.

<sup>5</sup> The United States federal criminal code (Title 22) does not specifically distinguish sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Instead, it provides for enhanced sentencing for those who are convicted for trafficking crimes that include components of kidnapping, rape, death, or threats to commit such acts. Specifically, the crimes of human trafficking enumerated in the United States criminal code (Title 22) include: Peonage (18 U.S.C. § 1581), Involuntary Servitude (18 U.S.C. § 1584), Forced Labor (18 U.S.C. § 1589), and Trafficking with Respect to Peonage, Slavery, Involuntary Servitude for Forced Labor (18 U.S.C. § 1590).

<sup>6</sup> The 2000 U.N. Protocol to "Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children" supplements the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Article 3 of this protocol defines human trafficking as follows: "The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs," (OHCR 2000).

<sup>7</sup> The ideological conflict between so-called abolitionist feminists and human rights activists were reignited following Amnesty International's release for its 2016 policy document on human trafficking. Specifically, Amnesty International called for the full legalization of prostitution as the most effective means to combat human trafficking (see Amnesty 2016, 2014; Farley 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Anti-human trafficking efforts are currently not listed as a line item in the United States DOJ budget. Rather, the majority of costs associated with the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes are already included in the department's general personnel costs. However, the DOJ's annual report of expenditures for its grant programs provides clues about the scope of this public investment. According to a 2017 agency report, the DOJ invested \$67 million that year to investigate human trafficking crimes and to provide victim services (DOJ 2017). This same report indicates the grants to NGOs victim service providers represented merely 16% of funding allocated to the department of anti-human trafficking activities. This report also claimed that the DOJ has requested an additional \$89.3 million for special anti-human trafficking activities plus \$45 million for Office of Justice Programs (OJP) allocated to funds for victim services (2017, 19). Those interested in the total scope of DOJ investment in anti-human trafficking activities should bear in mind that this figures exclude routine administrative costs associated with federal, state, and local government anti-trafficking efforts, such as those that would already be included in the budget for agencies, offices, and employees who investigate human trafficking crimes or enforce anti-trafficking laws as part of the scope of their law enforcement duties.

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<sup>9</sup> Additional FBI anti-trafficking programs include the Enhanced Collaborative Model Human Trafficking Program (ECM), which is jointly funded through the Victims of Crime (OVC) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program. In addition, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) coordinates additional interagency task forces through its local field offices and through national grant programs such as the Anti-Trafficking Coordination Team Initiative (ACT). Established in 2011 as a joint effort between DOJ, DHS, and the Department of Labor, ACT funds and monitors dozens of regional interagency anti-trafficking task forces throughout the country through a competitive grant program (DOJ Nd). According to the DOJ, from FY 2010-2011 to FY 2012-2013, the ACTeams alone have led to a 114% increase in cases filed, a 119% increase in defendants charged, and an 86% increase in defendants convicted (DOJ 2017, 7). ACT grants have also increased administrative and staff resources in the areas of trafficking-specific case coordination, grant administration, intelligence gathering, outreach, task forces, and victim assistance personnel within federal, state, and local governments and among NGO service providers.

## **PART 2. OUTREACH**

## CHAPTER VI

### **‘It's Like Going to Church:’ Attenuation in Outreach**

I struggled to balance a stack of Conair foot spas that I carried across the snow-covered parking lot of the Sugar and Spice strip club on Eight Mile Road in Detroit (a.k.a. “Sugar’s”). Tonight, the ministry volunteers planned to wash the dancers’ feet during outreach. Inspired, I brought essential oils, envisioning the annual Maundy Thursday foot washing ceremonies I knew from the Episcopal Church. But the volunteers had other ideas. “Actually,” said Nancy, “We’re giving the girls pedicures. The oil might keep the polish from drying.” She winked, a light-hearted reminder about the ministry’s policy to “go easy on the religion.”

As the heavy metal door blew shut behind us, we shuffled quickly into the dusty corridor that separated the club’s main floor from the street. Its relative warmth and silence offered relief from the bitter winter wind and incessant arrhythmic sloshing of car tires on the busy four-lane boulevard outside. To our right, a cloudy pane of bulletproof glass guarded the small room where the doorman normally sat. It was vacant. I barely had time to kick the snow from my boots, let alone assess the guard’s absence, as Nancy and Jennifer sped on.

Inside, I struggled to adjust my eyes to the darkness, flashing lights, and thumping hip-hop. The stage was empty. Instead, scantily clad women in brightly colored platform heels circulated on the floor. Jennifer approached a dancer, and shouted over the bass line: “Hello! We are from a Christian ministry and we have some gifts for the girls.” She offered Atlanta a pink and black gift bag, which contained clear lip-gloss, tampons, super glue, and clear



Band-Aids; emergency items that women who dance in the nude might need. Jennifer asked her: “Would you like a gift?”

Atlanta was new to the Den. She critically sized up the volunteers. Jennifer stood tall, in cheap boots and haggard beanie. Behind her, Nancy carried a plate of cookies. A middle-aged blonde in an ankle-length designer parka, Nancy exemplified upper middle-class domesticity. “Hold up. Exactly who are you?” Atlanta asked skeptically.

Before they could respond, Porsche, another dancer ran across the floor and embraced Nancy enthusiastically. She was soon followed by the club’s owner.

“Ah, it’s the Christian support group,” he said, winking at Nancy as he took a cookie. Nancy responded to his advances by batting her eyes and asking him when was the “last time” he had “gone to church.”

“Don’t worry.” Jennifer assured Atlanta, “We won’t preach. We just come here to love on the girls.”

Atlanta’s face lit up. “Oh, I understand” she sang. Shifting her posture and gesturing towards the stage she added, “We have many beautiful women here tonight. We will definitely show you ladies a good time.”

But Atlanta did not understand.

“Oh no, not like that,” Jennifer laughed. “We came to bring presents and to pray. Would you like to pray?”

### **Chapter Summary**

Jennifer and Nancy were volunteers with Mary’s Miracles, a 501(c)3 anti-human trafficking organization that was officially registered as a Christian Church on its 2016 tax exempt filings. Such ministries represent part of a broader movement that seeks to eradicate

human trafficking and exploitation by coupling sex worker rehabilitation programs with direct evangelical outreach at U.S.-sites where sex is sold; a tightly packaged rescue mission to save the bodies of American sex workers, as well as their souls. Yet, despite the mutually affirming discourse of anti-trafficking rescue and evangelical salvation, ethnographic observation revealed that during outreach, ministry volunteers did not tell women to leave their jobs or attempt to remove them from situations that they perceived to be exploitative or morally objectionable. Instead, volunteers from strip club ministries conceptualized outreach as a way to build “relationships” with women and to “form community around them” where they worked, i.e. strip clubs where the presence of evangelical volunteers was generally regarded as self-evidently benevolent by the women who worked therein, many of whom presented themselves as Christian believers.

In Section 1 of this manuscript, I outlined the historical development of the Christian anti-trafficking movement, specifically focusing on the ways that the cause has reinvigorated the evangelical community in the United States. Section 2 explored the phenomenon of survivor leadership by attending to the ways in which the evangelical anti-human trafficking movement is discursively constructed through survivor leadership, a historically emergent variation of self-advocacy, and intervention. The chapters in Section 3 focus on evangelical anti-trafficking intervention practice. Specifically, they focus on direct outreach at sites where evangelicals believe that sexual exploitation occurs, including strip clubs (Chapters 7 and 9) and street-based solicitation sites (Chapter 8).

The present chapter introduces outreach as a ritually significant interaction framework, which evangelical ministries and their volunteers distinguish from ancillary efforts to rehabilitate trafficking victims and women who are exiting the sex industry. By introducing outreach in this

way, this chapter lays the groundwork for systematic analysis of the dialogical practices by which volunteers seek to cultivate moral personhood through outreach; specifically, interactional practices of attenuation (Chapter 6), refusal (Chapter 7), and redirection (Chapter 8).

This chapter examines how religious actors who are women navigate ministerial narratives in venues where illicit sexual activity occurs. It explores how evangelical women go about the work of building relationships with women who work in these venues. It also explores how workers receive and protest volunteers therein. In doing so, this chapter conceptualizes outreach as a distinct interaction framework. Likewise, it explores the racial and gendered aspects of outreach as a framework that involves women appealing to religious narratives in order to establish interactional social solidarity across demographic domains.

This chapter begins with a brief summary of relevant literature. Specifically, it draws on theories of phatic function in order to analyze outreach a distinct interaction framework. To understand outreach as a gendered practice of relationship building, this chapter draws on theories of homosociality. It also briefly summarizes dominant ideological approaches to intervention in the adult entertainment industry, arguing that evangelical strip club outreach deviates from abolitionist and pro-sex work narratives.

Evangelical strip club ministries maximize their ability to build spiritual community in strip clubs in large part by delineating the goals of outreach from broader anti-trafficking goals. This chapter then shows how evangelical strip club ministries delineate outreach as a distinct interactional framework. Evangelical strip club outreach ministries must balance their public anti-sex trafficking goals with their mission to build relationships with women who may or may not perceive themselves as victims of exploitation. The central claim of this chapter is that

delineating outreach as a distinct framework of interaction affords outreach volunteers maximum creativity to achieve their relationship building goals.

The analysis in this chapter repeatedly returns to the stream of ethnographic activity at Sugar and Spice in Detroit. Specifically, it provides an ethnographic account of a group prayer and a foot-washing event that occur in Sugar's dressing room. Turning first to the group prayer event, this chapter examines various interactional and social-demographic asymmetries between the outreach volunteers and the dancers who work at the club. To underscore this asymmetry, and to explain the stakes of anti-trafficking intervention, this chapter then examines what exploitation looks like in low-resource strip clubs in Detroit. Likewise, this chapter then explores various criticism of evangelical strip club outreach.

In particular, this chapter presents statements from former ministry volunteers and current sex workers who argue that strip club outreach largely benefits the volunteers who do it, rather than the dancers themselves. This chapter builds on these criticisms by introducing additional information about the local religious landscape. It suggests that the success of such ministries in the city of Detroit largely reflects the demographics of strip clubs in the city, a community of African American women who are more likely than any other demographic to perceive religion as familiar and benignly supportive.

This chapter then returns to Sugar's analyze the foot-washing event that occurred after the group prayer. This analysis focuses specifically on the ways that ministry volunteers practice strategic attenuation during outreach by ignoring dancers' statements and behaviors that violate evangelical norms, while emphasizing others confirm their relational and spiritual goals.

Evangelical strip club outreach departs from many practices usually associated with missionary activity. Volunteers do not preach, quote scripture, or share their personal testimonies

during outreach. This departure is strategic; it ameliorates the risk that volunteers will alienate strip club staff and management, which would compromise volunteers' ability to return to a club in the future. However, it also engenders a dynamic in which volunteers are able to fully realize their interactional goal to assert an alternative intimacy in the strip club environment that is prefaced on Christian love. Through strategic attenuation and asymmetrical gift giving, listening, and touching, volunteers who have experienced sexual abuse, reconfigure strip clubs as sites of religious worship and sex workers as fellow travelers.

This chapter relies primarily on two bodies of theory to analyze observed activity: (1) Phatic Function and (2) Homosociality.

Studies of the “phatic function” of language examine the domain of non-referential communicative utterances whose principal purposes is to attend to channels of communication (Lemon 2013; Nozawa 2015; Zuckerman 2016); the metapragmatics of reaching out.

Homosociality is a descriptive term that distinguishes social bonds between individuals of the same sex from explicit same sex libidinal desire (c.f. Lipman-Blumen 1976). It is also analytical concept that has been used to locate same sex relations on a continuum of intimacy (c.f. Sedgwick 1985), to identify underlying and implicitly homoeroticism (c.f. Flood 2008), and to explore the ordering of the gender relations that support hegemonic masculinity (c.f. Bird 1996; Sedgwick 1985; Hammarén and Johansson 2014) especially the symbolic and literal exchange of women by men among, for example, the Trobriand Islanders (c.f. Rubin 1975) or American stock brokers (Decapua and Boxer 1999). Significantly less attention has been paid to homosociality among women, which frequently presented as desexualized relations.

By attending to the phatic function of outreach communication, as well as the homosocial aspects of such activity, the analysis in this chapter departs from previous approaches to analyzing anti-prostitution intervention action.

During the late twentieth-century legal advocates such as Catharine MacKinnon and radical feminist theorists such as Andrea Dworkin adopted feminist abolitionist rhetoric in order to assert that the exploitation of women in the adult entertainment industry constituted violations of their Civil Rights. Though the Civil Rights-based platform was largely unsuccessful in courts, radical feminists' unequivocal rejection of all forms of sex work, from cinematic and live erotic performance to prostitution, triggered visceral lasting divisions among feminists, which scholars often refer to as the "feminist sex wars" (Barton 2006, 158-165; Chapkis 1997; Dworkin 1983; Rubin 2011, 1993; Weitzer 2000). Later, debates leading up to the passage of the 2000 TVPA, which singled out victims of sex trafficking crimes from victims of labor trafficking, extended divisions between radical feminists and sex labor rights activists who justified their respective positions by appealing to essentialist claims about the intrinsic nature of sex work as either inherently oppressive or liberating; a set of polarized positions which has been criticized on ethical grounds, "imposed solidarity" (Agustin 2007, 152-159), as well as conceptual ones, as "a gross distortion of the subject matter" (Weitzer 2000, 3).

Unlike Progressive Era activists and contemporary so-called "rescue" workers that visit women at sites where sex is sold in order to relocate them, during outreach, volunteers with strip club ministries like Mary's Miracles did not attempt to remove individuals from situations that they deemed to be exploitative. Neither did they tell them to leave their jobs. Rather, the primary goal of the outreach interaction was a relation and spiritual one. While strip club ministries like Mary's Miracles often couple outreach with so called "after care programs" that are designed to

help women secure alternative forms of employment and to support them through that transition, such programs emphasized spiritual and religious mentorship for former dancers.

### **Delineating the Outreach Interaction Framework**

Abolitionist discourse creates a practical problem for strip club outreach ministries like Mary's Miracles. While secular feminists and conservative Christian activists frequently adopt abolitionist anti-human trafficking rhetoric to assert that the adult entertainment industry is inherently exploitative for women, strip club ministries must translate the goals of their outreach programs in a way that that accommodates women who do not identify themselves as victims of exploitation. At the same time, such ministries must articulate their mission ways that appeal to donors and institutional partners who are motivated specifically by anti-human trafficking concerns. Likewise, they must also convey their goals to outreach volunteers in a way that is consistent with their religious values and that mobilizes them around intervention efforts but that encourages volunteers to remain open about what the end-goals of that intervention might be. On its website, Mary's Miracles describes itself as a solution for women who are "trapped" in the "sex industry." Likewise, the group encourages donors to "join" Mary's Miracles in the "fight against sex trafficking." However, when describing its outreach program, the ministry emphasizes a different set of goals.

In their volunteer trainings, Mary's Miracles tells volunteers that the goals of outreach are to "build relationships with women" by "showing them love" and "meeting them where they are at." Speaking at a 2013 training event, Mary's Miracles' founder cautioned potential volunteers about the danger of confusing the ministry's broader anti-trafficking goals from the immediate interactional goals of outreach.

Rising to her feet and pointing to the door, she admonished anti-trafficking minded activists to “Just quit!”

Veteran volunteers in the audience responded to her dramatic tone and fierce posture with enthusiastic murmurs of agreement and at least one loud “Amen!”

Yeah, that’s right! If think you are gonna go out and be captain SAVE-A-HO, with your white cape and little Christian Bible, well honey, think again! ‘Cause I tell you, these girls can read you. They’ll figure you out in ten-seconds! And when you are out there, go easy on the religion, OK? Like if you write a note of encouragement for a gift bag don’t write “Jesus is the lover of our soul.” That just sounds creepy. You’ve got to show that love.

Participation at national conferences and in social media groups indicate that there are at least a dozen strip club ministries with four to fifty volunteers operating in each state, including at least five in every major U.S. city. The comments above illustrate how one such ministry attempts to delineate its broader anti-trafficking mission from the immediate goals of its outreach program. Just as abolitionist discourse presents a practical problem for ministries like Mary’s Miracles, so too does the missionization framework.

Strip club ministries often describe the work that they do as “rescuing women,” “being the love of Christ,” “sharing the gospel,” or “bringing light into the darkness.” Such phrases evoke traditional models of missionization in which Christians attempt to introduce or “bear witness” to their religious faith in order to covert non-believers. However, during outreach, strip club ministry volunteers that I observed in Detroit, Miami, Chicago, and Portland did not preach, read scripture, or share their personal testimonies of becoming spiritually “born again.”



During interviews, Mary's Miracles volunteers described the experience of doing outreach variously as "loving on sisters," "receiving the spirit," or even "like going to church." This approach, which cultivated strip clubs as sites of religious worship, altered the witnessing dynamic by placing volunteers and the targets of their efforts as spiritual co-conspirators engaged in a mutual struggle. While Mary's Miracles encourages volunteers to pray with dancers and to invite them to the ministry's monthly Bible Studies, during outreach, volunteers were instructed to leave their Bibles at home. This presented a particular point of contention for some volunteers, as will be discussed below. However, according to one outreach veteran, the ministry had good reason for this policy.

Historically, Mary's Miracles distributed Bibles during outreach until some club patrons complained, jeopardizing volunteers' access to the clubs. As one volunteer told me, "It's kinda sad. The girls liked the Bibles, but the customers didn't. Clearly these guys felt convicted with their sin. They didn't want the reminder!"

According to this particular volunteer, it was the customers, not the dancers, who objected to the infusion of religious narratives at the clubs. This view echoes the carceral feminist framework, which approaches women who participate in the exchange of sexual services as victims of their male patrons. Yet the religious narrative engenders a parallel dynamic. Strip club ministries approach locations where sex is sold as sites of worship. Likewise, they elevate the women who work therein as religious icons. To understand how this occurs, it is important to first understand how religious practices and prayers served to connect volunteers and dancers vis-à-vis their mutual opposition to the male consumers of sex.

### **Backroom Prayers**

Atlanta accepted the gift bag and apologized for her confusion about the purpose of the ministry's visit to Sugar and Spice. Sipping from a red silo cup, she leaned against the bar and explained, "Actually, I just moved here from Georgia with my boyfriend. But it's temporary. I thought I could make some quick money. But it doesn't like there's much go around." As I looked over the ripped vinyl bar stools and dusty linoleum floor, I imagined what a disappointment it must have been.

Sugar and Spice was less a fantasy factory and more of a neighborhood dive bar. While more exclusive clubs nearby restricted patrons' access to dancers off stage, Sugar's was a relatively porous space. Dancers sat side-by-side customers at the bar, their flesh spilling from their thongs as they bit into hamburgers and fistfuls of fries. Sugar's was also exactly the sort of club that welcomed the volunteers.

The Den's owner welcomed volunteers from Mary's Miracles by waiving their cover fees and allowing them to enter the dancers' dressing rooms. When asked why he did not object the presence of a Christian ministry, he explained that "the girls are happier" when the ministry visited. Describing himself as a "lapsed Catholic," who thought of the club like a "family," he said: "[Mary's Miracles] is like a support group. And these girls need some support."

After we finished at the bar, Porsche ushered us to the backroom. As we walked, she linked arms with Nancy. Then she pulled out her phone: "I've got that video of my pastor that I told you about last time." During a previous visit, Porsche had told Nancy about her home church and had invited the volunteers to attend. She extended her phone at an angle so that we could see though its cracked screen and played a video of a middle-aged man in garish zoot who was giving a sermon about lottery strategies. According to Porsche, "All the verses in the Bible have a code. That's how it works." The sermon seamlessly integrated religious scripture and gambling,

bringing to mind historical accounts of storefront churches that ran numbers games in Detroit during period of Great Migration. However, it did not resemble the type of theology that Mary's Miracles espoused. Nancy did not offer any correction.

"That's great," Nancy said.

Porsche beamed.

A passing dancer noticed the video and scolded Porsche, "If you spent less time in here talking and more time working the floor, you wouldn't need that!"

Undaunted, Porsche clarified the point of the video: "No, see the thing is she's got a church and I've got a church."

We moved aside, allowing other dancers to pass by. While Nancy began to distribute the gift bags, I arranged the foot spas on the floor. Next to me, Jennifer spoke with a dancer named "Cocoa."

A soft-spoken woman wearing a faded yellow mini dress who appeared to be barely twenty-one years old, Cocoa carried a small cosmetic bag, which was dwarfed by her coworkers' large bedazzled cases that lined the brightly light dressing room counter. Jennifer scrolled through baby pictures on Cocoa's phone, which she had handed to her for that purpose. Behind them, another dancer twerked; fully nude and heavily pierced with bright pink dreadlocks and long neon green fingernails, she thrust her hips in a low squatting stance before transitioning into a modified head stand while shaking her buttocks, in a motion commonly described to as making them "clap." Cocoa leaned in so that I Jennifer and I could hear her above the din and said nervously, "I can't do that. Plus, I'm just so tired."

Cocoa explained that she had awakened at five in the morning and had planned to arrive to the club by seven that night. But after having worked a full shift earlier that day as a Walmart

greeter, she still had to rush home to meet the babysitter, feed her infant son, and then drive him to her mother's house for the night. Jennifer listened silently, smiling when Cocoa added: "But I'm blessed my baby isn't with strangers."

"Yes, that is a real blessing" Jennifer agreed.

Jennifer, like Nancy, described herself as "conservative Christian."<sup>1</sup> At the time she did outreach for Mary's Miracles, she attended a large Baptist church known for its anti-trafficking fundraisers. However, her motivation to do this work was largely personal. For two years Jennifer had lived out of a motel nearby Sugar's where she traded sex for heroine. Five years on, she was born-again, clean and sober, raising her children at home with her husband but struggling to find employment with a felony record.

Clapping her hands Porsche assembled the dancers, "Okay Ladies, it's time to pray." In response, three outreach volunteers and thirty-two dancers in various stages of undress stepped away from their spots at the counter and gathered in a large circle clasping hands. Raising her voice above the chatter, Porsche scolded them to "simmer down" so that they could "thank Jesus" for the "beautiful ladies." Having quieted the group, she opened with a loud invocation in which she asked, "Jesus to make this a safe and successful night." As the prayer progressed around the circle, participants took turns adding their own requests.

While some dancers seemed to merely tolerate this apparently impromptu interruption of their work time, passing when it was their turn to pray, many participated enthusiastically. Most in the circle closed their eyes as they prayed, responding to supplicants' prayers by nodding and whispering affirmations of "praise Jesus." Approximately one-third of those present contributed their own supplications, requesting "healing" for ill family members, for "protection" on the floor, and for "good tips" during the upcoming shift. Bolder listeners shouted enthusiastically,

responding speaker cues by calling out “Amen,” and, in one case, glossolalia; unintelligible fluid vocalizing in syllabic segments understood by Christian charismatics and Pentecostals to stem from a speaker’s embodiment of divine forces as well as her skill in accessing them (see Bialecki 2017). I rarely observed dancers or volunteers speaking in tongues. However, based on my observations with Mary’s Miracles, as well interviews with volunteers with other ministries elsewhere, dramatic emotional prayers were common during outreach. The prayer concluded, Jennifer and Nancy set to the work of arranging the foot spas.

### **The Stakes of Outreach**

During outreach, volunteers from Christian anti-trafficking ministries like Mary’s Miracles attempt to build relationships with women who work in the adult entertainment and sexual service industry. As this ethnographic example shows, outreach volunteers act in ways that are intended to signify friendship and caring. They listen, distribute gifts, pray with dancers, and touch them in intimate but licit ways. This chapter looks closely at these practices, exploring their asymmetry and the strategic attenuation they entail. However, before proceeding to that discussion of outreach practice, it is important to first understand how such ministries do and do not approach strip clubs as sites of sex trafficking. In order to do so, it is helpful to understand how exploitation commonly occurs in these settings.

Despite increasing public concern about the issue of sex trafficking, the way that human trafficking is framed in popular rhetoric and in U.S.-law constrains how abolitionists and pro-sex worker activists alike assert claims of exploitation. Claims of abuse that involve sexual assault and sexual harassment in strip club settings are exceptionally difficult to prove (Barton 2006; Hausbeck and Brents 2010; Holsopple 1998; Dank *et al* 2016). Instead, dancers have primarily

succeeded in remediating workplace exploitation through wage complaints and class action lawsuits that allege violations of fair labor practices. In multiple U.S.-markets class action suits have alleged that clubs violated the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) by incorrectly classifying dancers as independent contractors (not W-2 employees), compensating them exclusively in tips, and charging them “house fees” to dance as well as numerous arbitrary fines and penalties (Barton 2006; Burns 2013; Chun 1999; Covert 2015; Essif 2014; Fischer 1995; Gajan 2017; Ikonomova 2017).

Detroit strip club owner Alan Markovitz claims to have pioneered these strategies as a way to reduce labor expenses while also establishing new streams of revenue for the businesses he owned (Markovitz 2009, 62). In surprisingly transparent but characteristically self-congratulatory language, Markovitz detailed what he calls the “delicious economics” of his “revolutionary” three-part strategy to “circumvent” labor laws in his 2009 autobiography “Topless Prophet: The True Story of America’s Most Successful Gentleman’s Club Entrepreneur,” excerpts from which have been used as evidence in legal complaints against him (for example see *Jane Does 1-3 v. The Coliseum, Inc.* 2013). According to Markovitz, he first reclassified dancers from wage-earning employees to independent contractors and then added “house fees” to charge dancers for the “privilege of making an income on the premises,” (2009, 116). Finally, Markovitz implemented an elaborate system of fees and fines in which dancers were forced to pay tip outs to non-tipped employees or charged if they arrived late or left early (2009, 128).<sup>2</sup>

Though generally illegal and widely criticized among activist-minded dancers, some dancers have expressed their preference for the independent contractor model (for example see Rachel 2012, Associated Press 2015). Working as independent contractor as opposed to a W-2

employee offers an attractive tax avoidance strategy that makes possible for some dancers to take home significant additional cash income each month. Ideally, it also provides flexibility, allowing dancers to set their own schedules to accommodate their personal and other work obligations. However, for dancers who are not well tipped, who work in low-end clubs like The Den, or who work during slow nights, it is possible to leave work owing more money than they ultimately earned during any given shift.

In Detroit, house fee schedules were often prominently displayed on strip club dressing room walls. At the Den, the posted fee chart indicated that dancers were charged twenty dollars if they arrived by six o'clock, forty dollars by seven, and increased to as much as one hundred fifty dollars for midnight arrival: prime business hours. (Those arriving after midnight were instructed to "ask management.")

Curious to know if typical tip income at Sugar's was sufficient to sustain such payments, I asked Cocoa if the fees influenced her work schedule. Cocoa explained that after dropping her son to her mother, she had had "car problems" and thus had arrived late to the club that night. Her tardiness had resulted in a twenty-five-dollar charge. I asked her if she thought she'd recoup that amount. Cocoa hesitated, "I hope so." I shared her concern. Cocoa's self-consciously retreating demeanor and modest costume were insufficient to make her stand out among the cacophonous bold laughter of her coworkers.

Cocoa shrugged, "Maybe there will be an after party?"

By this, Cocoa was referring to the practice of performing at private parties outside of normal working hours, either off-site or at the club itself once it was officially closed. Such events were understood to be more lucrative but also more demanding; because they were hosted outside of business hours and with a smaller group of dancers, after parties offered dancers

chances to perform with less competition and without the municipal regulations that govern sexually oriented businesses. They also presented risks for dancers who may or may not be willing to provide “extras.”<sup>3</sup>

Among dancers there exists significant debate over the provision of extras. Some dancers decry the practice on ethical grounds arguing that it debases their work by erasing the boundary between stripping and prostitution. Others offer a more pragmatic critique claiming that the provision of extras creates unfair competition among dancers who provide such services and those who do not.

“Josephine” is a dancer in Detroit who is also the editor-in-chief of the sex worker blog “Tits and Sass.” In her 2013 post “An Open Letter to the Extras Girl” Josephine rejects criticisms that such dancers are “hookers” have “no morals” or are “dirty.” Instead, she contends, the problem is that such dancers are “undercutting my money.” Addressing her colleagues, Josephine writes:

Your chummy blow job makes my private dance seem churchy ... The market is highly competitive here in Detroit. We are home to over 30 strip clubs. That’s one strip club for every four square miles. For a city in permanent recession and once referred to as a ghost town, that is a lot of dancers! And I’m proud to say that Detroit offers the best lap dances in the country, for only \$20 a song! Unless you’re working, Extras Girl. Then that crisp \$20 might buy a blowjob, a hand job, or even sex. ... Maybe it’s because there’s just so many of you now and it’s starting to feel like the dancers who only provide lap dances are outnumbered. (Josephine 2013)

Josephine’s 2013 post includes a suggested “peace treaty,” in which she requests that dancers who provide extras engage in safer sex practices, properly dispose of condoms, and charge more money for their services. Josephine also invites such dancers to respond to her post with alternative opinions. A blogger who posted simply under the name “M” responded to Josephine’s invitation.



Like Josephine, M also claimed to work in Detroit. In her response post she agrees that offering extras in clubs that frown upon the practice is not “fair play.” However, she argues that the provision of extras is part of her “charms” and describes herself as a “shrewd businesswoman” for providing them (M 2013).

Reader comments on this post suggest that the provision of extras is a widespread practice in strip clubs, especially in Detroit. They also reflect a general consensus that offering extras within the club environment offers a relatively safe alternative for sex workers who want to build a regular clientele without having to resort to street-based prostitution. Dancers like Josephine and M share common attitudes about the appropriate role of extras in their profession. However, their underlying arguments reflect significant differences in the way that sexual services are valued in their respective workplace environments.

In her response to one reader’s comments, M describes her “home club” as one that is frequented by “rich and influential men” whom she expects to “drop hundreds of dollars for my attention.” In contrast, Josephine laments having to compete with “\$20 blowjobs,” which, she argues, is increasingly the norm in Detroit; a city in “permanent recession.”

This hierarchy in Detroit’s strip club economy reflects class divisions described by club owner Alan Markovitz in his 2010 autobiography. According to Markovitz along Eight Mile in Detroit,

A guy can go into one [type of club] after a day wrenching transmissions in his work shirt with this name sewn on above the left pocket and spend six or seven bucks on a cold one while geeking on a tangle of rowdy-looking dames ... Or he can wear his three-piece suit and slip into the posh folds of a dark yet dazzling cavern of carnality for a twelve-dollar Bombay martini and a Dominican smoke grown from Cuban seed. (Markovitz 2010, 12-13)

While some clubs in Detroit do command the high prices and “dazzling” atmosphere to which Markovitz aspires, the vast majority are smaller venues. Informal and relatively under

resourced, venues like Sugar's offered deeply discounted drinks and relied on a large volume of unskilled dancers. Such differences reinforced class, race, and gender-based hierarchies.

Broadly, though not exclusively, high resource clubs in Detroit advertised themselves with images of white dancers whose body shapes conformed to dominant cultural ideals of sexual desirability. In contrast, low resource clubs like Sugar's often advertised with images of full figured black women. Based on comments made by Josephine and M, as well as many former and current dancers I spoke with while conducting ethnographic research for this project, the practice of providing extras was common in both high and low resource clubs in Detroit regardless of the physical appearance of dancers in their workforce. However, clubs' advertising practices, the prices they charged, and the extent to which they vetted their clientele, shaped customers' expectations about the costs they would incur while visiting clubs and the level of access to which they were entitled therein.

High resource clubs offered the additional service of insulating their clientele from public scrutiny. As M states in her response comments about her home club "I'm quite sure the owner has paid of the police ... I never worry about it," (M 2013). In this way, the extent to which a particular dancer experienced extras as exploitative largely mirrored the conditions that might make her vulnerable to exploitation elsewhere: discrimination, financial insecurity, and educational disparity. For dancers like Cocoa who depend on dancing to supplement their income but who are unwilling or unable to differentiate themselves through skilled stage dancing performances, providing extra services may constitute an option of last resort to pay onerous house fees. Despite such egregious practices, dancers like Cocoa did not pursue legal remedies either because they were unwilling, unable, or unaware that they could do so.

Despite numerous high-profile legal battles that indicate that the exploitation of (largely women) dancers in strip clubs is widespread,<sup>4</sup> dancers receive little support from polarized feminist actors. The grounds for such suits stem from strip clubs' failures to correctly classify dancers as employees. Supporting this cause thus entails recognizing erotic performance as a legitimate form of labor, which is anathema to abolitionist views that dominate anti-human trafficking rhetoric. At the same time, it requires supporters to acknowledge that the abuse of women in strip clubs occurs, in contrast to narratives of empowering sexual performance (for example see Egan 2006, 2006). In this way, ideological divisions among activists may compound women's experiences of exploitation on the ground (also see Agustin 2007, 163; Kempadoo and Doezema 1998, 2005, 2015; Rubin 2011). By delineating the goals of outreach interaction from broader anti-trafficking ones, ministries like Mary's Miracles effectively skirt the issue. For some pro-sex work activists "a bunch of stripper and cupcake-loving Christians who focus their passionate activism on strip clubs" represent a curiously refreshing "contrast to the furious and limited conversation around trafficking limiting so much sex work activism," (Red 2014). At the same time, it raises questions about the goals of their intervention they attempt to provide. When I visited Sugar's with Mary's Miracles, Nancy had been visiting the club at least once a month for more than one year. Although the members of her outreach team had changed, Nancy acted as the lead volunteer for this particular venue. This allowed Nancy to develop personal connections with specific dancers (like Porsche) who could act as an intermediary for the ministry. Yet, in order to configure Porsche as an interactional peer, Nancy had to overlook multiple social asymmetries in the immediate context.

Nancy's divorce and her late husband's life insurance provided financial independence that allowed her to live in one of the state's most expensive zip codes while sending her minor

children to an elite private school. In contrast, Porsche resorted to lottery earnings to supplement the meager tip wages that she earned dancing at one of lowest resources strip clubs in the city. Likewise, Porsche was a young African American woman who relied on the Den's customers and dancers to provide much of her emotional and financial support. In contrast, as an upper middle class woman of European descent with a large professional social circle, Nancy was insulated from many of the societal forces that make individuals vulnerable to exploitation: poverty, discrimination, and social isolation. Thus, despite her personal history of sexual abuse, Nancy's wealth and privilege afforded her access to myriad social supports and mental health resources. It also enabled her to ignore multiple marks of poverty. Porsche's haggard dance clothing, cracked phone screen, rough skinned hands, and badly chipped manicure were troubling signs in an industry where physical appearance and grooming were paramount. In this context, Nancy's strategic dis-attenuation to signs of social discrimination and economic suffering reflects one way that volunteers delineate the outreach interactional framework from the larger project of combatting sex trafficking exploitation. Likewise, it raises questions about what the intervention goals of such outreach might be.

### **Critics**

In 2016, I received an unsolicited telephone call from a former Eve's Angels' volunteer asking to speak with me about the ministry. Concerned that the caller had misconstrued my relationship with the group, I referred her to Eve's Angel's website site where she could find updated contact information for the organization.

"No," said the caller, "I heard you were a researcher and I have some concerns. I just wanted you to know about the kind of people you are dealing with."

I hesitated, weighing my various ethical commitments. I had heard that Eve's Angel's had suffered high attrition rates among its volunteers in the past. The caller's tenure with Eve's Angels long predated my own. Yet, as an ethnographer, I felt immediately protective of a community who had allowed me to observe and participate in their work. Having obtained the caller's consent to record our conversation, I taped the call.

The caller stressed that she was not a former dancer herself but rather had been motivated to volunteer with Eve's Angels because she "wanted to help victims" of human trafficking. The caller suggested that the ministry was acting in ways that contradicted its stated mission.

I think that was the source of my discomfort. I mean, I didn't really understand what we are doing there, in the clubs. After a while it just got to feeling like we were supporting the industry. We'd go and we'd pay the valet. We'd pay the cover. We'd pay for pop at the bar. After a while it just got to feel like we were actually supporting what was happening there by buying into that business. We just kept going back and back to the same places. We didn't have any impact.

When I asked the caller whether or not the dancers that she met during outreach would agree with her view, she deflected. The "real problem," she said was actually the ministry leadership whom she claimed were reticent to discuss the possibility of volunteers branching out to do outreach at new clubs.

I explained that most of the clubs now waived entrance fees for Mary's Miracles volunteers and asked: "Do you think you'd feel differently if you didn't have to pay?" The caller paused and then pivoted: "Look, I don't know about that. I just don't know how going back month after month and praying with the same people at the same places does anything to make them leave. I just didn't know who we were doing this for."

Given that this former volunteer's stated objective was to "make women leave" dancing, it is unsurprising that she was unsatisfied by the approach to outreach that Mary's Miracles

promotes. In interviews, some conservative Christian anti-trafficking activists asked me if I thought that such ministries actually did more to support the industry than to combat it. However, this caller's comments about the inefficacy of prayer were unexpected from a mission-minded evangelical Christian. Likewise, her criticisms mirror those of pro-sex work activists for whom the lack of capacity of such groups to help women in material ways raises suspicions about their motivations. Specifically, concerns about who stands to benefit from evangelical outreach in strip clubs. The example of the Cupcake Girls illustrates this tension.

The Cupcake Girls (CCG) is a non-profit organization that dispatches volunteers to do outreach at strip clubs as part of its mission to combat sex trafficking and exploitation. Founded in 2011 by Michigan native Joy Hoover, CCG primarily operates in Las Vegas, Nevada and Portland, Oregon (Miller and Hoover 2015; Red 2014). Unlike Theresa Flores, Alice Jay, and Anny Donewald, Hoover does not identify as a sex trafficking survivor. Rather, she came to this intervention work from a former career as a hairstylist. Hoover uses "spa treatments" as a way to reach women in the industry in order to refer them to community support services (Pastor 2013; Oldander 2013).

While CCG is not formally registered as a religious non-profit, the group is Christian by origin, as are many of its current volunteers and institutional affiliates (Red 2014; Pastor 2013).<sup>5</sup> In interviews, Hoover and her volunteers state that despite their Christian affiliations, during outreach, they seek to downplay their religiosity and instead focus on "chatting with women" (for example see Red 2014; Pastor 2013).

In a 2013 interview with the flagship evangelical news outlet Christianity Today, Hoover describes this balance in lighthearted terms. According to Hoover, CCG is "the hands and feet of Jesus" but their outreach is less like mission work and more "like a slumber party." According to

Hoover: “We do hair and makeup and lashes and massages and talk about what’s going on in [dancers’] lives,” (Pastor 2013).

CCG has been the subject of significant criticism within the adult entertainment industry. While the CCG highlights its offerings of material support, many dancers who have sought its assistance claim that support failed to materialize, or, at worst, compromised their privacy in ways that placed them and their families at risk.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, among donors, support for CCG grows; from 2014 to 2016 annual revenue reported on CCG 990 tax-exempt filings rose from \$167,000 to \$270,000. While CCG offers a cautionary tale about the untended harms of external intervention, it also provides insights that are relevant to the present study. Namely, questions about whom such interventions are intended to serve.

Writing under the pseudonym “Red,” one former dancer posted a long-form interview with CCG volunteers in Portland, Oregon (Red 2014). Reflecting on that interview, Red writes, There’s an ambivalence present here in the emphasis on Cupcake Girls as a fun social activity that volunteers can do for themselves, as self-improvement or because it makes them feel good. Of course, it’s good to enjoy volunteer work: it’s free labor, done to benefit other people, and the burnout rate is high. It’s good to enjoy what you do, but not everything can be enjoyable. Some of the most necessary work that needs to happen around sex work is messy and frustrating. It tends to require in-depth knowledge of and familiarity with the people you want to support. And if volunteering is something you do for yourself, where does that position the ostensible object of your benevolent intentions?

In Red’s diagnostic, CCG’s failures stem from widespread ignorance within the organization about the nuances of exploitation. Specifically, she observes a patronizing attitude that confuses the needs of relatively “privileged” dancers and sex workers at relatively high

resource establishments with more marginal groups, such as those engaged in survival-sex work and street-based solicitation. In particular, Red notes Hoover's lack of personal experience working in the industry. In these aspects CCG contrasts with the type of outreach that I observed in Detroit who were conducting explicitly religious outreach in extremely low resource venues. When asked who the target demographic of outreach was, a longtime Mary's Miracles volunteer explained it in this way,

You know, Jessica, I'm really not interested in the girls who are dancing to put themselves through law school or whatever. I don't know them. They aren't me. I'll be real with you, I don't give a shit. You know I was out there for two years before I turned eighteen? I didn't sell myself for tuition. I did it to get high. I go for girls like me, for the ones who have nothing, who believe they are nothing, who have nothing to lose. That's who we need to save. That's who we need to save us in the church.

For volunteers like this, reaching out to women through evangelical outreach was a response to their prior experience of trauma and suffering. Likewise, the lighthearted aspects of outreach represent less of a "fun social activity" than they do an urgent endeavor to reassert the dignity of women on their own terms. This urgency is as much motivated by concern about sex trafficking and exploitation as it is by a theological commitment to revival. In the case of Detroit, specifically, it was the ministry's revivalist goals, rather than its anti-trafficking ones, that seemed to resonate with dancers. In many ways this was unsurprising, given that the majority of dancers that the ministry encountered were women of African descent. National polling data indicates that African American women in particular stand out as the most religious observant demographic in the United States (Masci, Mahamed, and Smith 2018, Pew 2014, 2007; Sahgal and Smith 2009). Likewise, African Americans are more likely than any other demographic to report that they feel "unwelcoming" when they go to church (Pew 2018). Thus, in order to explore



how volunteers and dancers cultivated solidarity on religious grounds, it is necessary to first understand the broader social landscape in which they do so.

### **Race, Religion, and Familiarity in Detroit**

As of 2016, dancers at twenty-four of the approximately thirty strip clubs in the city allowed volunteers from Mary's Miracles to visit them on a monthly basis. Such clubs granted volunteers significant access, waiving entrance fees and allowing volunteers to enter in dancers' dressing rooms. In contrast, secular interventionists in Detroit struggled to duplicate the ministry's success. While conducted research for this project, I interviewed staff from four secular women's shelters who told me that they had been unable establish contact with the clubs.

Women who worked in clubs largely seemed to consider volunteers' spiritual motives as self-evidently benevolent. The notion that evangelical missionaries would be received as non-threatening contravenes the plethora of scholarship that demonstrates how religious discourses and institutions, especially conservative Christian ones, have jeopardized the health and well-being of women, especially sex workers and women of color. However, in contrast to social workers and law enforcement, ministry volunteers lacked the authority to physically detail women or to remove their children. Likewise, dancers were suspicious of feminist actors who sought to articulate solidarity on unfamiliar or paternalistic terms.

Moreover, Mary's Miracles was unique within the broader strip club ministry community nationally. In interviews, volunteers from strip club outreach ministries in other U.S. cities reported that they were turned away by club management more often than they were granted admittance. For Mary's Miracles' volunteers, this suggested the ministry enjoyed special divine

“favor.” From an anthropological perspective, it raises broader questions about how religion is signified, especially in Detroit.

National historical polling data indicates that rates of religious affiliation and frequency of participation in religious services have decreased in the United States over the past sixty years.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, since the 1970s the number of Americans who identify as “atheists,” “agnostics,” or as “nothing in particular” rose from fewer than one-in-ten to just under one-in-four by 2015 (Smith and Cooperman 2016). Many public commentators have suggested that the rise of the so-called religious “nones” reflects the increasing “secularization” of the United States population (Binart 2017; Lipka 2015; Pew 2014). However, despite decreasing rates of reported religious affiliation, as recently as 2017 nine-out-of-ten Americans surveyed report that they engage in spiritual or religious beliefs or practices, broadly defined (Pew 2018). Further, while seventy-one percent of Americans surveyed report that are religiously observant (e.g. attended religious services and/or engaged in practices such as prayer, scriptural study, or a belief in God), one quarter of those who did not observe in these ways still nominally identified as belonging to a specific religious group, including 16% of non-observants who identified themselves as “Christians” (PEW 2018). Such apparent discrepancies in belief, practice, and identity have prompted scholars to scrutinize the growing group of religiously unaffiliated Americans, both those who claim a nominal religious identity despite being non-observant as well as religious nones. This scholarship is relevant to the present study because of what it reveals about how and where Americans practice religion, why they do so, and how religiosity varies demographically, especially according to gender and ethnicity.

While rates of religious affiliation continue to decrease in the United States, nationwide survey research conducted by the Pew Research Center since 2007 indicates that rates of

religious observance have remained largely unchanged, especially among evangelical Christians, women, African Americans, and respondents aged 50-64 (Pew 2015, 2018). Specifically, the percentage of Americans who report a nominal religious affiliation decreased exclusively among Christians and primarily among mainline Protestants.<sup>8</sup> However, the percentage of Americans who identify with religions other than Christianity has increased and the percentage of Americans who describe themselves as “evangelical Christians” has remained steady and even increased in some geographic regions (Bump 2018; Pew 2018; Stetzer 2015).

Age is the primary variable that determines relative religiosity. Pew’s 2014 Religious Landscape Study indicates that the frequency of religious “nones” rises steadily among younger Americans, from 12% (age 65+) to 36% (age 18-29). Additionally, lower rates of nominal religious affiliation and reported religious belief were most prevalent among white males and Asian Americans (Bump 2018; Pew 2014, 2018, 25, 83).<sup>9</sup> In contrast, women and African Americans exhibited rates of religious observance that were strikingly similar to Christian evangelicals and individuals aged 50 to 64. Specifically, these two demographic groups were substantially more likely than the general public to nominally identify as religious, to view religion as a benefit to civic life, and to identify as “Christian” (Pew 2018, 2014, 2007; Sahgal and Smith 2009).<sup>10</sup>

African Americans, and black women in particular, stand out as the demographic that exhibits the highest rates of religious observance in the United States (Masci, Mahamed, and Smith 2018, Pew 2018, 2014, 2007; Sahgal and Smith 2009). Specifically, African Americans are more likely than the general public to identify as being affiliated with a specific religious tradition (82% vs. 77% respectively), especially Christianity (78% vs. 71%), to report that they attend religious services at least a few times per year or more (83% vs. 69%), and to claim that

religious was a “very important” factor in their lives (75% vs. 53%) (Pew 2014). Notably, African Americans are the only demographic group in which reported rates of religious participation exceeds rates of religious affiliation; +1% (African Americans) vs. -8% (all U.S.-groups) (Pew 2014).<sup>11</sup> Such relatively high rates of religious observance among African Americans regardless of religious affiliation confirm previous findings.

In their analysis of 2008 polling data, Pew research associates identified multiple measures that indicated relatively high rates of religiosity among unaffiliated African Americans when compared to the unaffiliated population overall (Sahgal and Smith 2009). Specifically, unaffiliated African Americans, those who did not identify with a specific religious tradition, were three times more likely than members of the unaffiliated public to report that religion was at least “somewhat important” in their lives, to pray daily, and to attend weekly religious services. Further, unaffiliated African Americans were as or more likely than self-identified Catholics and mainline Protestants to express a certain belief in God or a literal view of the Bible.<sup>12</sup> Such trends were especially pronounced among African American women in particular, African-American women also stand out for their high level of religious commitment. More than eight-in-ten black women (84%) say religion is very important to them, and roughly six-in-ten (59%) say they attend religious services at least once a week. No group of men or women from any other racial or ethnic background exhibits comparably high levels of religious observance. (Sahgal and Smith 2009)

While African Americans, and black women in particular, report higher levels of engagement with religious traditions, they also give different reasons for their participation. Specifically, black Americans are substantially less likely to cite “non-belief” as a factor for not attending religious services: 21% (black) vs. 29% (white) and 24% (Hispanic) (Pew 2018, 14).

Among respondents who identified as Christian but who reported that they rarely attended church, African Americans were more likely than others to report that they do not attend church because they “do not feel welcome” there: 22% (black) vs. 13% (white) and 15% (Hispanic). Among those who regularly attend religious services, African Americans were more likely than others to report that they did so for “comfort in times of trouble/sorrow:” 79% (black) vs. 63% (white) and 64% (Hispanic) (Pew 2018, 21). Further, African Americans are among those most likely to believe that religious institutions to “more good than harm” in American society (Pew 2018).<sup>13</sup> Strip club ministries like Mary’s Miracles, potentially fill this need, by duplicating church experiences of group worship, prayer, and comfort among predominately African American female work force in strip club settings.

### **Foot Washing**

In the dressing room at the Sugar and Spice, Porsche slowly dipped her feet into the bubbling water of the Conair foot spa. As she did, her audible moan of pleasure elicited laughter from the group. “You should really try it!” she said, pulling Nancy toward the adjacent chair, “Let me give you a backrub.”

Nancy declined, “You girls need it more than I do!” Kneeling on the ground before her, Nancy took Porsche’s heavily calloused feet in her hands and slow massaged them in the whirlpool. Nancy explained, “You girls work so hard. It’s the least we can do.” Turning to Jennifer, Porsche invited her to take a turn. Likewise, Jennifer politely declined. Next, Porsche looked to me. “Sit here. I give a really good back rub.” She winked.

Confused about the terms of Porsche’s invitation, I looked to Nancy and Jennifer for direction. They provided none. Anxious that Porsche might feel slighted, I accepted her

invitation and awkwardly positioned my chair so that my feet were in the tub as my back faced Porsche. At this point, another dancer entered the room.

“What is this?” she shouted.

“It’s a backrub chain” Porsche called out.

Jennifer didn’t miss a beat. “We are Christians. We brought presents.”

The dancer clarified, “No. I want to know you are doing here.”

Porsche reassured me, “Don’t mind her. She’s new.”

Visibly agitated, the dancer slammed open her locker and emptied its contents into a large duffle bag. “I go to Church. I got no problem with Church. But Church doesn’t belong here. You shouldn’t be here. Jesus is not here. You need to leave.”

Releasing my shoulders, Porsche rose to confront her: “No, you need to leave.”

As I dried my feet, Nancy and Jennifer hurriedly packed our things. The two women shouted at one another. Another dancer escorted us out of the room.

Exhaling a large cloud of marijuana smoke our rescuer told us: “Don’t mind her. She’s drunk. The girls love it. You are doing good thing. I’m a nurse so I know.” She offered the joint to Jennifer, inviting her to take a drag. Waiving the smoke aside, Jennifer wordlessly declined the joint. Smiling, she added: “God bless you. You are doing great work too.” The women quickly embraced before we sped through the door.

In the car outside, Jennifer and Nancy commented on what they had observed. Describing the event as a “success,” they expressed their thankfulness for Porsche’s “growing faith” and remarked at how “wonderful” it was that the “girls” now had a “nurse” in their midst. Equally notable was what they did not say. Nancy and Jennifer did not comment on Porsche’s lottery theology, Cocoa’s poverty, the obvious drug use, or the dramatic terms our hasty

departure, merely stating that they would “pray for” that “poor girl” who was so uncomfortable seeing “Jesus at work.”

When asked why she did not disclose her personal story to Cocoa, Jennifer insisted that “it wouldn’t help.” She explained: “I think about what I would’ve wanted to hear, when I was in the life. I knew that story. What I needed was hear was stories of people who were married with professional jobs. I needed to imagine myself in a different life story.”

Evangelical missionization relies heavily on the genre personal testimony. Through the practice of repeatedly sharing one’s personal story of spiritual redemption, and by listening to the stories of others, individuals repeatedly reenact their own redemption. The practice of refraining from disclosure thus represents a deviation from norms as well as a practical strategy for outreach. As Jennifer explains it, the mutual solidarity cultivated during outreach was not based on shared stories of suffering but rather on asymmetrical gifting and physical contact.

Nancy and Jennifer distributed personal gifts: homemade cookies and strategically filled gift bags, which signaled to the dancers their knowledge of the work that they did. They also touched the dancers in intimate but licit ways (foot rubs). However, they refused to share their own stories of sexual abuse and exploitation, even when it would be socially appropriate to do so, as in the case of Jennifer’s conversation with Cocoa. Likewise, they declined potentially sexual overtures from Porsche and the Den’s owner without calling them out. Despite her playful demeanor, Nancy was no stranger to sexual predation. The widow of a physically abusive husband whose string of infidelities came to light after his death. During Bible Study, Nancy frequently described him as a “sex addict.”

Through strategic dis-attenuation Nancy and Jennifer reasserted the terms of the distinctly Christian love they sought to spread, which contrasted with the intimacy that they

associated with the strip club setting: platonic vs. sexual, chaste vs. sinful, free vs. remunerative. By asserting this type of intimacy, with these individuals, in this setting, Nancy and Jennifer modeled what they believed to be appropriate Christian love for the dancers and also for themselves. In doing so they framed themselves as travelers: women whose financial livelihood depended on sexual services they provided to men.

### **Going to Church**

Evangelical strip club ministries often describe the work that they do as “rescuing women,” “being the love of Christ,” “sharing the gospel,” or “bringing light into the darkness.” Such phrases evoke traditional models of missionization in which Christians attempt to introduce or “bear witness” to their religious faith in order to convert non-believers. However, during outreach, ministry volunteers did not preach, quote scripture, or share their personal testimonies of becoming spiritually “born again.”

Kristine Diaz Coffman is a Christian blogger and volunteer with Created, a Tampa-based ministry that combines outreach in the sex industry with job training and housing assistance for women. In a 2016 blog post, Diaz Coffman describes her initial experience doing outreach with Created. Specifically, she describes how women she met during outreach challenged her pre-conceptions of Christian worship by providing “some of the powerful prayer [she] ever experienced.” Self-conscious of her former naiveté, Diaz Coffman writes,

I have experienced the presence and fullness of God more profoundly in the clubs than I have in most churches. I know that might be a harsh sentence to say to some, but I won’t minimize this because it’s true. Praying during club outreach has been some of the most powerful times of prayer I’ve ever experienced because when we join hands and gather in prayer or worship as a community of broken women, and we all acknowledge the need for God to come save us from ourselves, and to meet us where we’re at—He comes every time. Together as



sisters, we call out to God, He know us by name, and hears us. (Coffman 2016 emphasis in original)

The practice of building spiritual relationships in strip clubs allows Diaz to distinguish the benevolent spiritual objectives of evangelicalism from stigmatizing conservative religious discourse. It also inverts social structural dynamics commonly associated with missionization. As Created notes on its website, the vast majority of women that the ministry encounters during outreach grew “up in church” are “familiar with religion and Christianity” and have participated in church institutions such as “choirs” and “mission trips” (Created no date).

This inversion was especially pronounced in outreach interactions that occurred in the majority African American city of Detroit. As the example from Sugar and Spice shows, African American dancers ministered to white suburban women by initiating conversations about religious themes or leading them in prayer. According to many volunteers, one of the most profound realizations they described from outreach was not that the ministries bring “Jesus into strip clubs” but rather that Jesus was “already there). This dynamic opens multiple possible configurations about what successful anti-trafficking outreach could be.

Unlike secular social service agencies that also conduct outreach in Detroit at sites where sex is sold, volunteers from strip club ministries operate independently of governmental contracts and foundation grants. Similar to organizations led by evangelical anti-trafficking activists in Section 2, such ministries were accountable to their donors or institutional church partners, but they were not beholden to externally mandated professional best practices or formal grant evaluations. Moreover, unlike the public speeches made by evangelical anti-trafficking activists, outreach occurs largely unobserved by the greater evangelical public. All of this granted volunteers a high degree of flexibility in how they approached outreach, including, ideally, in ways that accommodated women on their own terms. For example, strategically dis-

attending to so-called “high-risk” behaviors while reinforcing religious narratives as well as engaging in other practices that would violate professional boundaries mandated in intervention fields such as social work as well as conservative Christian behavioral norms.

Further, unlike social workers and law enforcement, ministry volunteers did not have the authority to incarcerate women, reduce their benefits, or remove their children. Thus, among the various actors who seek to intervene in strip club settings, religiously motivated outreach volunteers may be perceived as relatively non-threatening. In the case of Detroit, such perceptions afforded outreach volunteers a high degree of access to sites where sex is sold.

Strip club outreach thus represents a paradigmatic ethical puzzle. The divergence between evangelical rhetoric, which emphasizes rescue and salvation, and outreach practice, which emphasizes intimacy and fellowship, reflects the practical need for such ministries to balance their anti-trafficking and religious goals to accommodate various publics and discursive contexts: donors, volunteers, and sex workers. In the case of volunteers who have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation themselves, this divergence also reflects the need to balance their ministerial goals with their relationships to settings and communities, which they regard to be fellow travelers. During outreach, locations and individuals that have historically been viewed as morally corrupt by Christians are reframed as sites for the cultivation of virtue. Yet, the discourses surrounding outreach, as well as the specific interaction practices that outreach entails, leave open questions about whose virtue is at stake and on what grounds.

## Notes to Chapter 6

<sup>1</sup> Like Jennifer and Nancy, most individuals who volunteer with strip club ministries identify as evangelical Christians. This is not surprising given such ministries' focus on evangelization as well as broader demographic trends; according to nationwide polling data collected by the Pew Research Center, in 2014 more than one-in-four Americans nominally identified as "Evangelical Protestant," making Christian evangelicalism the most populous religious tradition in the United States as well as the most socially conservative one. According to nationwide polling data collected by the Pew Research Center, more than seven-out-of-ten Americans nominally identify as Christian (70.6%). Of those, 36% describe themselves as "Evangelical Protestant" (25.4% of Americans overall), 29% as Catholic (25.4% overall), 20% as "Mainline Protestant" (14.7% overall), 9% as "Historically Black Protestant" (6.5% overall), and .5% as Mormon, Orthodox, Jehovah's Witness, or "Other Christian" (3.3% overall). Compared to their other Christian counterparts, evangelicals were most likely to describe their political ideology as "conservative" (55% of evangelicals vs. 37% of Catholics and mainline Protestants and 36% of historically black Protestants), to state that abortion should be "illegal in all/most cases" (63% of evangelicals vs. 47% of Catholics, 35% of mainline Protestants, and 42% of historically black Protestants), and to "oppose/strongly oppose same sex marriage" (64% of evangelicals vs. 57% of Catholics, 35% of mainline Protestants, and 52% of historically black Protestants). While survivor leaders and volunteers who were former sex workers tended to express more nuanced views about gender and sexuality, most members of strip club ministries expressed conservative attitudes. In particular the vast majority of volunteers with whom I spoke at national conferences and through local ministries described themselves as anti-abortion ("pro-life"). While few were willing to explicitly condemn same-sex sexuality, and some even expressed support for marriage equality, most were ambivalent about transgender individuals, whom they viewed with suspicion. In particular, volunteers expressed distress about inclusive restroom policies, such as those enacted by the major retail chain Target in 2016, which they, argued, would increase human trafficking by making young "girls" vulnerable to "men" who would "exploit" such policies to their "own advantage." By and large volunteers denounced the liberalization of social attitudes about sexuality, gender, and marriage and expressed their belief that adult entertainment was the inherently exploitative result of that liberalization process. Yet, in doing so, they did not condemn dancers and others who worked at strip clubs. Most significantly, they did not insist that women should leave their jobs as a precursor for spiritual salvation.

<sup>2</sup> Tip-pooling is a compensation practice in which an employer retains a portion of an employee's tips in order to distribute that amount to other employees; to "credit" it to the "pool." FLSA guidelines state that employers "may only take a tip credit for the amount of tips each tipped employee ultimately receives, and may not retain any of the employees' tips for any other purpose," other than crediting it to the pool (USDL 2018, 2 emphasis added). In contrast, Markovitz sought to circumvent FLSA rules by re-classifying dancers as independent contractors and demanding they tip-out the club itself in the form of house fees, which were not calculated based on a portion of the tips dancers ultimately received but rather reflected pre-established amounts. For owners like Markovitz, this model "guaranteed income for the house," (Markovitz 2009, 126).

<sup>3</sup> So-called "extras" refer to a wide range of practices in which dancers engage in physical contact with customers, generally during private dances ("lap dances"). In most municipalities physical contact of any kind between dancers and customers is legally prohibited. In Detroit, prohibited types of contact are detailed in the city codes that govern sexually oriented business licenses and sexually oriented employee licenses ("dancer cards"). Violations may result in fines or suspensions of licenses. As such, they are officially discouraged by club management. However, because they occur in private, away from the main floor in "VIP" or "champagne" rooms, extras are difficult to identify and regulate. Further, because they are lucrative relative to main floor performances, clubs and dancers are financially incentivized to pursue them. Among dancers, extras are distinguished from assault in that they are negotiated in advance. As a dancer and customer settle on the cost of a private dance, increasing levels of physical intimacy are generally associated with higher tips.

<sup>4</sup> While dancers in multiple states have prevailed in federal class action law suits against clubs who violate the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) since at least the mid-1990s, club owners throughout the country continue to violate FLSA rules, including large national chains that are repeat offenders (Covert 2015, Egan 2017). Likewise, many dancers that pursue legal action recover relatively little compensation. Per person payouts are reduced by substantial attorney fees, increasingly large class sizes, and, in some cases, reactionary legislation and questionable judicial calculations that have reduced initial settlement figures from as much as \$80-\$141 million to as little as \$1-\$6 million for classes of tens of thousands of employees (Covert 2015, Koenig 2018; Wilonsky 2014). This has garnered pushback from some dancers and discouraged more reticent ones, triggering conflicts among members of the class and among dancers at the clubs where they work (for example see Wilonsky 2014). A recent federal class action settlement involving a Michigan-based national strip club chain was revised upon appeal to replace cash settlements for dancers' back wages with "coupons," which the dancers could use to offset future house changes and tip out fees (Egan 2017).

<sup>5</sup> While the Cupcake Girls' website states that the organization is a "non-religious non-profit," in media interviews, Hoover describes her objective in explicitly religious language; "the hands and feet of Jesus" (Pastor 2013). Hoover is an evangelical

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Christian and, like Eve's Angel's founder Anny Donewald, was formerly affiliated with the national evangelical strip club ministry group Strip Church Network.

<sup>6</sup> In 2014, dancers in Portland coordinated a petition drive asking strip club owners in the city to stop admitting volunteers from The Cupcake Girls. In 2015, criticism of CCG reached the point that Hoover circulated a video addressed to her critics in which she affected a humble but unapologetic response, inviting individuals working in the sex industry to "join" the group as "advisors" (Hoover 2015). That next year, disgruntled former associates of CCG founded an independent website to chronicle the group's violations: CupcakeGirlsXXXposed. Posters to this site, as well as others writing on sex worker blogs such as Tits and Sass, claim that CCG failed to provide them promised assistance ("bait and switch"), harassed their clients, and released confidential information about them in ways that comprised their personal safety.

<sup>7</sup> While historical trends in national polling data suggest that the percentage of religiously affiliated Americans has waned since the late twentieth-century, such decreases have been modest and varied significantly among demographic groups and geographic regions (Bump 2018; Gallup *N.d.*; Newport 2018; PEW 2018, 2015, 2014; Stetzer 2015). Nationwide polls such as those conducted by Gallup and the Pew Research Center have sought to measure rates of religiosity in the United States by asking multiple questions related to participation in religious services as well as formal affiliation with specific religious traditions. Since 1952, Gallup has asked respondents whether or not they attended "church or synagogue" in the previous week. The number of poll-takers who responded "yes" to this question decreased 14% in the past seven decades: specifically, from 49% in the mid-1950s to 40% in 1992 and to 35% in 2017 (Gallup *N.d.*; Newport 2018). Responses to broader questions about attendance directed at this same group indicate higher rates of participation but similar declines. For example, the number of Americans polled by Gallup who reported that they attended religious services on a "weekly or near weekly" basis declined from 44% in 1992 to 34% in 2017 (Gallup *N.d.*). Those reporting that they were "members of a church or synagogue," declined from 70% in 1990 to 54% in 2017. National polling data collected by the Pew Research Center show similar trends (see Pew 2018, 2015, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Based on information provided by the Pew Research Center's Religious Landscape study, the percentage of Americans who identified as Christians decreased from 78.4% in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014 (Pew 2007, 2014). In particular, the percentage of Americans who nominally identified as mainline Protestants decreased substantially during this time, from 18.1% to 14.7%. In contrast, the percentage of Americans who identified as "evangelical" remained less affected, decreasing from 26.3% to 25.4%. Further, the percentage of Americans who identified as members of "Non-Christian Faiths" rose from 4.7% in 2007 to 5.9% in 2014.

<sup>9</sup> According to nationwide survey information gathered in 2014 by the Pew Research Center 23% of Americans reported that they had no religious affiliation. This rate varied among demographic groups, with Asian-Americans being most likely to report no religious affiliation (31%) and African Americans being the least likely to do so (18%). Among other ethnic groups unaffiliation was 27% (other/mixed), 20% (Latino), and 24% (white). Also, women were substantially less likely to report no affiliation: 19% (women) vs. 27% (men). In comparison, on 17% of respondents aged 50-64 reported no affiliation.

<sup>10</sup> According to nationwide survey information gathered in 2014 by the Pew Research Center 23% of Americans reported that they had no religious affiliation. This rate was lower among African Americans (18%), women (19%), and respondents aged 50-64 (17%). Likewise, while 71% of Americans surveyed identified themselves as Christian, this rate was higher among African Americans (79%), women (74%), and respondents aged 50-64 (77%). Similar trends were observed in responses to the questions about the relative importance of religion in one's life. Whereas 77% of the American public reported that religion was "very important" or "somewhat important" in their lives, 91% of African Americans reported that religion was important in their lives, while 82% of women and 83% of those aged 50-64 agreed.

<sup>11</sup> African Americans stand out as the demographic that exhibits highest rates of religious observance despite a lack of religious affiliation. In 2014, 69% of Americans reported that they attended religious services at least a few times a year, while women and those aged 50-64 reported attendance rates of 73% and 72% respectively (Pew 2014). Unsurprisingly, frequency of attendance at religious services was less than the percentage of individuals who reported having some sort of religious affiliation: 77% (overall), 81% (women), 83% (age 50-64). This means that when surveyed, Americans are more likely to report being religiously affiliated than they are to report attending religious services. In contrast, the percentage of African Americans who reported that they attended religious services at least a few times per year exceeded the percentage of African Americans who reported having no religious affiliation: 18% vs. 17% respectively. This suggests that African Americans in particular are more likely to attend formal religious services for reasons other than nominal religious affiliation.

<sup>12</sup> According to Sahgal and Smith, "Unaffiliated African-Americans, for instance, express certain belief in God (70%) at levels similar to those seen among the general population of mainline Protestants (73%) and Catholics (72%)." Further, "unaffiliated African-Americans are somewhat more likely than mainline Protestants or Catholics overall to hold a literal view of the Bible

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(33% among unaffiliated African-Americans vs. 22% among all mainline Protestants and 23% among all Catholics),” (Sahgal and Smith 2009).

<sup>13</sup> The 2018 Pew report “Why Americans Go (and Don’t Go) to Religious Services” grouped respondents into typologies of relative religiosity based on their responses to questions that assessed engagement with wide a variety of religious attitudes, benefits, and practices (Pew 2018). These typologies varied from most to least religious. The most religious groups, those who broadly reported higher rates of religious affiliation and religious practice included “Sunday Stalwarts,” “God and Country Believers,” and the “Diversely Devout.” Others were not necessarily affiliated with a specific religious tradition but still reported high rates of religious observance, the so-called “Relaxed Religious” and “Spiritually Awake.” The least religious typologies included “Religious Resisters” and the “Solidly Secular.” While race and ethnicity were not used to define the typologies, some typologies exhibited distinct demographic profiles. For example, African Americans were most highly represented among the three most religious groups (57%) but comprised the smallest percentage of the “Solidly Secular” (2%). Specifically, African Americans constituted 18% of Sunday Stalwarts, 21% of God and Country Believers, 18% of the Diversely Devout, 11% of the Relaxed Religious, 9% of the Spiritually Awake, 9% of Religion Resisters, and 2% of the Solidly Secular (Pew 2018). When asked whether or not they believed that religious institutions do more good or harm in American society, individuals grouped into of these typologies responded as follows: Sunday Stalwarts (86% more good vs. 3% more harm), Good and County Believers (77% vs. 4%), Diversely Devout (70% vs. 7%), Relaxed Religious (58% vs. 12%), Spiritually Awake (53% vs. 16%), Religion Resisters (15% vs. 64%), and Solidly Secular (29% vs. 43%) (Pew 2018).

## CHAPTER VII

### **‘They Know We Will Help’ – Refusal in Outreach**

Frankie reached through the car window to touch Angel who stood quietly on the sidewalk outside. The women were praying. As Angel bowed her head towards the front passenger side door, Frankie leaned out, gripping Angel’s forearms in a partial embrace. It was just after 8:00 PM on a weeknight in July. The light lingered. The roads were clear. The engine idled as we parked on a busy street in a low-resource mixed residential neighborhood in East Detroit. From my vantage point in the back, I watched our driver Mark vigilantly scan the street, shifting his gaze between the rear and side view mirrors of the borrowed Jeep that served as the prayer van for the evening’s outreach shift. Since 2014, the ministry Spreading Love had dispatched a prayer team to this area multiple nights every week.

Just minutes before, Angel had disclosed a brutal sexual assault. “You know,” she confided, “I was held hostage for two days and raped. I didn’t even report it. I mean, when I went to report it, the lady was like ‘So what supposedly happened?’ And I was like, ‘But this did happen. I have bruises!’” Angel raised her slender arms for inspection. In the twilight her bruises were indistinguishable from the myriad cuts, sores, and infected track marks; a large open abscess stretched from her chin to collarbone. “This lady was like, ‘What do you expect?’ This lady basically stated that she didn’t believe that it had happened!”

Police sirens wailed nearby. The volunteers sat silently in the car as a trio of squad cars raced by. Around us, the neighborhood’s crepuscular residents were beginning to emerge. Eventually Frankie responded: “Angel, is there anything you want from us?”

Angel began to cry: “I’m just tired of being here. The only reason I don’t have a job is because I have no ID, no proof to prove who I am. I went to college. I have skills!”

Frankie handed her business card with Spreading Love’s phone number.

Angel hesitated: “I already have this card. I have so many of those damned cards!” Angel described how she kept a collection of various ministry cards neatly displayed on the dresser in her room. “Like an altar,” she explained, tugging at the string of rosary beads, which she wore as necklace. “I pray to the cards every night to keep me safe.”

Despite, or because of this disclosure, it was unclear to me if Angel was capable of making a telephone call, let alone if she believed anyone would respond if and when she did.

Another volunteer, Marie, interjected from the back seat: “Call us. We can help you. We don’t want you to feel like you don’t have a choice, or you don’t have anywhere to go.”

“But I don’t know where to go,” Angel protested.

Marie reassured her: “But we don’t want you to feel—”

Angel cut her off: “I don’t have any friends. I have nothing. I’m out here, all these years. I just have no idea what to do. I have too many feelings to be here.”

The volunteers watched silently as Angel cried.

Eventually, I spoke up, breaking the frame of the well-organized outreach framework. As the volunteer assigned to the rear drivers’ side, I was not expected to initiate contact during outreach. Leaning out and across Marie to the rear passenger window, I called out: “Angel, do you have a phone?” She turned to me: “I don’t have anything.” Incredulous, I asked again: “You don’t have a phone?” Angel held up the small white rectangle: “I have a dresser and I have your cards.” I opened my mouth to ask Angel if she’d like me to call emergency services. But I was too late. Marie and Frankie were rolling up the windows.

Rising to her tiptoes, Angel smiled as she shouted through the gap: “God bless you guys. Thanks for all this.” We pulled away. As Marie and Frankie waived, Angel stood on the sidewalk, holding plastic sacks filled with hotel toiletries and bologna sandwiches, a purple sundress draped over her arm.

### **Chapter Summary**

The present chapter examines practices of refusal and resistance in the context of evangelical anti-trafficking outreach in order to understand why and how anti-trafficking outreach ministries resist removing people from sites of exploitation. Despite claims that they “rescue slaves” and “save lives,” during outreach, ministries like Spreading Love do not remove people from potentially exploitative situations. Yet most volunteers do not experience this as a contradiction as such. This raises questions about the ultimate goals of outreach, including questions about who, or what, is its intended target. To understand this puzzle it is first important to understand that outreach represents a distinct domain of anti-trafficking intervention, as well as a distinct interactional framework.

Previously, this project examined other domains in which religiously motivated activists attempt to realize their anti-trafficking goals: through public policy, public education, and survivor support programs. The chapters in Section Three focus on direct outreach; programs in which evangelical anti-trafficking ministries dispatch volunteers to locations where trafficking is believed to occur in order to minister to individual victims and build relationships with them over time. The present chapter approaches outreach as an interactional framework, which entails practices of attenuation, deferral, and redirection but that rarely involves physical removal. This chapter begins by briefly summarizing the literature on interactional refusal. Next, I track volunteers’ interactions with “Angel,” a twenty-something intravenous drug user who trades sex



for drugs and money on the street Shepard's Park; a low-resource neighborhood in Detroit known for high rates of outdoor prostitution. In doing so, I describe the specific duties that the Spreading Love ministry assigns to its outreach volunteers; tasks and responsibilities through which the ministry attempts to build "consistent relationships" with the targets of its efforts. I also explore a segment of interaction that is comprised of multiple constituent actions of self-disclosure, prayer, and gift giving: the practices and objects of outreach.<sup>1</sup> This chapter then analyzes these practices in terms of other background about Spreading Love's evangelical theology.

In his 1955 lecture "How to Do Things with Words," and later published revisions (Austin 1962; Austin 1975), John L. Austin defined an "illocutionary act" as an utterance which, intentional or not, changes the social order in a meaningful way (Austin 1962). Previous studies of refusals in language and interaction draw on Speech Act Theory (following Searle 1968) in order to present refusal as a "paired response;" one of the limited options available to speakers when responding to another speaker's act, "rather than as an act initiated by the speaker" herself (Houck and Gass 1999:2). Refusal is an act of speech that may entail efforts to avoid, resist, or decline requests and invitations. As such, refusals potentially provide metapragmatic insight into the nature of the relationship between interlocutors and the discursive and social systems they inhabit. Refusal strategies are dependent on cultural norms, immediate context, and multiple paralinguistic cues that determine which speakers have the authority to issue invitations, on what grounds, and who has the power to say, "no" and why. As such, to refuse is a risky endeavor. Sociolinguistic studies of refusal have primarily focused on politeness, approaching refusal as a "face threatening act" or FTA (Brown and Levinson 1978; Félix-Brasdefer 2006; Houck and Gass 1999; Nelson *et al* 2002). This framework has yielded a rich body of scholarship about the

myriad creative strategies that speakers employ for saving face when refusing interlocutors of higher status, especially in cross-cultural situations, including strategies for teaching non-native speakers how to develop pragmatic competence in this domain (for example see Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1991; Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990; Houck and Gass 1999; Scollon, Scollon, and Jones 2011). Specifically, what Brown and Levinson describe as "FTA-minimizing strategies" that "face-bearing rational agents" may utilize to assess and diminish intersubjective risk (Brown and Levinson 1978,91). This approach to understanding refusals has also deepened understandings of selfhood by documenting cross-cultural variations in solidarity, affiliation, cooperation between individualistic and so-called "collectivist" conceptions of "face" (c.f. Félix-Brasdefer 2006; Scollon, Scollon, and Jones 2001). Previous linguistic studies that focus on the interactional pragmatics of refusal present multiple possible outcomes for the "refusal sequence," including the possibility that refusal may take the form of a postponement. For example, as a rain check for a dinner invitation (Houck and Gass 1999:59). By emphasizing FTA-minimizing strategies, such studies foreground refusals as acts of social closure in which discursive competence is at stake. In the present analysis, I revisit this assumption by analyzing a situation in which the speakers' intended outcomes for their request acts and refusal responses are less clear. Specifically, I examine a self-described "rescue" organization whose volunteers refuse to remove people from potentially exploitative situations. In examining the segment of interaction that opens this chapter, the question 'What is happening when self-designated helpers refuse to help?' instead becomes: 'When is an act of refusal, not a closure but rather an invitation to future interaction?'

Creating a channel of communication is a complicated act. Establishing and maintaining sociality entails multiple constituent activities of attenuation, uptake, and refusal. It also requires

interactions across multiple "frames of interaction" (Goffman 1974). Like skilled theatrical performers who maintain ideal and engaging tension between the characters they play across multiple acts, Christian outreach volunteers are "phatic experts" who leverage the practices and objects of outreach as a medium for oscillating contacts and gaps with possible converts (Lemon 2013:81).

In the previous chapter, I engaged theories of hailing (Althusser 1970; Tavory 2016) to explore how volunteers from Christian anti-sex trafficking outreach missionaries strategically ignore and attend to certain elements in the physical and social environment at sites where sex is sold. In these settings, believers manage their spiritual purity by dis-attending to objectionable images, utterances, and behaviors while focusing on those that can be construed as evidence of people's positive moral capacity or potential virtue. The current chapter is interested in deferral: how and why self-designated helpers refuse to help instead pushing the contact to a future frame of interaction.

I argue that by denying Angel immediate assistance, volunteers were attempting to defer the channel of communication the next frame of interaction, thus ensuring the possibility that the volunteers will return to pray with Angel next week and also that she would be there to receive them. In this way, volunteers re-enact the same spiritual pursuit with which they believe Christ pursues themselves.

Given the size, scope, and frequency of Christian outreach intervention agencies, which outpace and outnumber their secular counterparts in the city of Detroit, understanding what Christian outreach entails is a public health imperative. Mondays to Thursdays, between the hours of 7 to 10 PM, the intervention an individual who is soliciting sex on the street in Detroit is most likely to receive consists of a snack, a toiletry kit, and a Christian blessing.

## **Spreading Love**

Summer was my favorite time of year for outreach. The light lingered. The roads were clear. All of which eased the evening drive between the strip clubs on the North, East, and western borders of the city and also through the neighborhoods known for outdoor prostitution. Volunteers for outreach teams gathered around on weeknights at 7 o'clock in a well-lit parking lot on East side of Detroit. There they left their cars and climbed into a single sturdy vehicle that would serve as the night's transportation.

On this particular night, I accompanied volunteers from Spreading Love, a faith-based 501(c)3 non-profit and self-described "Christian social justice" organization whose stated mission is to "build consistent relationships" with people in "street prostitution." Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Spreading Love dispatched four-person teams, drawn from a rotating pool of more than one hundred fifty volunteers, to assigned neighborhoods where they distributed food and prayed. Unlike the strip club ministry from the previous chapter that sends the same volunteers in the same teams back to the same clubs month after month, Spreading Love rotates volunteers through a set of rigidly assigned roles. While the specific individuals who make up any given night's outreach team may vary, each fulfills the duties and responsibilities assigned to a seat position in the vehicle. They also arrive prepared with notes from the previous weeks' outreach team.

In many ways, the Spreading Love protocol brings to mind Erving Goffman's early work on interactional roles, which some scholars criticized for "liquidating" the self, reducing it to a mere "peg" on which the clothes of the interactional role are hung (Goffman 1959:253; MacIntyre 2007(1981), 32). According to the new volunteer training packet, the driver

coordinates, leads, and oversees outreach, including directing where the team goes and how long they stay. While the driver is responsible for “directing and maintaining order within the vehicle based on what is taking place on the street,” the individual seated in the front passenger side is primarily tasked with initiating interactions with individuals outside of the vehicle. As the designated “prayer warrior” for outreach, this person is tasked with “being led by the Spirit” to pray with people, “holding their hands,” and “looking them in their eyes,” while also “practicing wise discernment” to manage the safety of the group inside the vehicle. This includes signaling to the driver when to leave and initiating “the rolling down and rolling up of the windows.” Like the front passenger side rider, the backseat passengers are also tasked with prayer and vigilant attention. The individual seated behind the driver is the designated “intercessor,” tasked with “communicating any promptings from the Holy Spirit or visions” and taking notes that will be included in the outreach report, the individual seated behind the front passenger bags the food and gifts and handles “prayer overflow” on the sidewalk side of the car. It was also this individual’s responsibility to discretely take notes about all outreach encounters.

As the individual seated in the position of the “intercessor” (behind the driver), the following day I would write up the information about whom we met, where and when and what information they shared with us. This information included personal disclosure from individuals in the neighborhood as well as updates that they shared about others who lived nearby. I would then forward this information to the volunteer coordinator to distribute to the rest of the volunteer pool. In this way, the team going out the next week could pick up where we leave off; continuing threads of conversation, queuing up the next frame of engagement. In this way, the ministry argues, Spreading Love presents a “consistent face” to the people they pray with on the street. One volunteer explained it like this: “Every week we come back. Our friends know

that. They recognize that as long as they are there, we will come to meet them," (Spreading Love Volunteer personal interview).

That particular night's team was typical: twenty-something college graduates whose ancestors arrived from Europe in the early twentieth century during the heyday of industrial capitalist manufacturing. But unlike a previous generation who left the city for the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960 (a period commonly referred to as the "white flight" era) Mark, Marie and Frankie reverse this trend. Educated but underemployed, they had moved back to the city, motivated as much by cheap rents as an idealistic spiritual vision. They exemplified the broader resettlement pattern of their large non-denominational Protestant church: young, mostly single, white evangelicals<sup>2</sup> who are moving to the city to live, work, and worship in Detroit.

### **Angel in Shepard's Park**

Spreading Love volunteers met Angel in Shepard's Park, a mixed residential and light industrial neighborhood known for high rates of outdoor prostitution. Here, long summer days rendered the multi-block gaps between functioning street lamps barely noticeable. They also lightened the mood. Shepherds Park is located ten minutes from the city's financial district, which has been the focus of recent urban renewal and investment efforts. According to 2010 census data, median household income in the Park is lower than ninety-five percent of all U.S. neighborhoods. Here, nineteen out of twenty of children live beneath the federal poverty line. But those statistics only reflect documented residents.

Despite an official vacancy rate for more than fifty-percent (Data, 2009) journalistic accounts reveal that the Park is densely populated. These once modest working class homes now falter in various states of decay: windows boarded up, roofs caving in, gas and power lines

disconnected and hastily re-attached. Those who reside in these multiple abandoned houses subsist by trading sex, drugs, and (if they can get it) informal temporary employment. They survive the harsh Michigan winters by burning wood, trash, and kerosene.

For Detroiters who spend their nights hustling on the Park's main avenue, the summer months bring relief from the biting winter winds that deposit a seeming unending succession of snow drifts; soot-crusting ice piles that catch every broken bottle and swallow every lost earring before disgorging their contents in March. Here, summer eases the walk from corner to corner. It also increases survival. Come late July, the undiscerning passerby driving through the Park could easily be forgiven for thinking that the men and women there walking the track were actually on their way to grab a pop at the corner store or to attend a multi-hour evening service at one of the neighborhood's dozens of storefront churches.

Seated in back of the Jeep, Marie was the first to spot Angel, "Mark. Slow down. Who is that?"

Frankie corrected her. From her vantage point in the front passenger side (the designated first-contact position for the outreach team) Frankie could see more clearly. Gasping, she enthusiastically corrected the backseat rider: "No. No. It's Angel!"

Up to this point, conversation in the van had been energized and jovial. Mark had recently decided to move into his own place and had been regaling us with humorous anecdotes about the stress of hunting for a suitable apartment in the city. However, once we spotted Angel, the frame shifted.

Mark stopped mid-story, the laughter halted, and we leaned forward and out towards the windows, alert, preparing to engage. Mark activated the turn signal, hit the brakes, and swerved towards the curb, doing his best to gently pull over to spot where Angel waived. Rolling down

her window, Frankie leaned out over the front passenger side door and called out: "Hello Angel! Do you want a lunch? Is there anything specific that we can pray for you?"

At this, Angel turned. Her face fell. She sighed heavily. "Hey guys. I'm just thinking of my life." Pausing, she looked down and kicked a plastic bag with her foot. It drifted a mere few unsatisfactory inches.

Angel had been a regular with the prayer van ministry for at least a year. Though by her own accounts, she had been on the streets for much longer. She was one of twenty-seven (27) contacts that we would speak with that night.

Angel bowed her head towards the car. Frankie watched with her eyes wide open as Angel looked toward the asphalt and cried. Frankie prayed,

Lord, we pray for angel. We pray for her. We pray that she would know that you love her, that you care for her. Lord, you know her. You listen to her. You know that she's on these streets. Lord, put your arms around her. Lord, her you know that you would protect her. Reassure her that you know her heart. That you want good things for her. That you love her. That you are for her.

As the Frankie prayed with Angel, Marie sorted through bags filled with food and donated toothbrushes, small bars of soap, and trial-sized deodorants, and tubes of toothpaste. All of which had been donated to the ministry by local churches. She was consolidating them into what the outreach ministry called "hygiene kits." Plastic sacks filled with personal necessities in convenient sizes that could be discretely tucked into a woman's purse: too small to be traded for drugs but sufficient to last until the van returned next week to hand out more. The plastic crumpled loudly as Marie tripled bagged extra sandwiches, chips, and brownies.

A heavy afternoon rain had purged the humid air, channeling debris into ephemeral road ponds and watering the urban gardens and volunteer foliage that enveloped the crumbling structures in Detroit's empty lots like a fecund post-industrial blanket. To our right behind



Angel, dense green grasses pushed through cracks in the parking lot of a small cinderblock African American Baptist Church. Just ahead, maturing fruits hung high over the sidewalk, dangling from the unkempt branches of an apple tree that grew from a narrow planting strip in front of a deteriorating 1930s brick warehouse.

Despite its partially collapsed outer stairwell, lack of locking doors, and waist-high piles of molding furniture in the courtyard, the building was home to self-described “intentional community” of transient anarchists. The tree’s root ball had long since escaped its cement confines and its trees upper branches pushed against the building’s boarded-over second-story windows, as if the bushy green mess was planted intentionally to offer a handy snack for the stream of visitors who slept on the second floor after parties. Eight blocks down, the weekly drum circle at the new age healing center would be well underway, drawing in the neighborhood’s young, mostly white, urban farmers, many of whom squatted in the abandoned houses nearby. The Baptist churches and the Arab-American center on the other side of the street had closed for the night, sending congregants home to their families.

After the prayer concluded, Marie reached out through window to hand Angel two swollen plastic grocery sacks containing food and personal hygiene products. As Angel accepted them, her arms dipped briefly under the weight. “I put a double portion in there for you,” said Marie. “I thought you might need it.” Angel smiled.

As I peered through the window at Angel’s emaciated frame, I agreed. Her body showed signs of prolonged drug use, exposure to the elements, and untreated illness. Track marks lined her skeletal arms. A large open abscess stretched from her left chin to collarbone. Despite this, she carried herself with a lighthearted vanity; tilting her head to the side and smiling sweetly as she

spoke, gracefully adjusting her long brown hair, “I’m embarrassed to ask this, but do you have any tampons?”

“No, we don’t have anything like that,” Marie replied. Fearing that women might trade tampons for drugs, volunteers were reluctant to include them in the hygiene kits for distribution during outreach. Likewise, the ministry never distributed condoms, bleach kits, or other harm reduction items. Because, according to the volunteer coordinator, “Spreading Love does not want to encourage this lifestyle.”

Then Marie did something I’d not witnessed during my previous outreach nights with Spreading Love. She handed Angel something extra. It was purple cotton sundress, a hand-me-down from Bethany’s own closet, a favorite, she said, from her high school days, which she had recently outgrown. The personal nature of the gift was exceptional in an organization that prioritized equal distribution of food and gifts during outreach.

Angel beamed. Examining the machine made embroidery in her hands, she cooed, “Oh my God. It is so beautiful! Now I’m going to cry even more!” Angel’s hearty cathartic laugh shook her shoulders. Marie and Heather sat quietly. Mark watched the road. It was at this point in the interaction that I interjected to ask Angel if she had a phone, effectively breaking the frame and possibly spurring our hasty exit.

Later that night, I asked Mark, Frankie and Marie about Angel. Spreading Love forbids volunteers to bring strangers into the car during outreach under any circumstances. Instead instructing volunteers to wait for them to call, which, as I pointed out, is difficult to do for people without phones. Indeed, the official “Exit Plan” document I received from Spreading Love, the ministry states: “We always want to push for the individual to meet us the following day [after outreach]. This allows us time to make appropriate plans and it allows the individual to follow

through and demonstrate they are serious.” I wanted to understand how volunteers balanced this official policy with their own desire to help. What was the emotional cost they bore, if any?

Frankie explained, “As hard as it is to hear stories like that. We give her our number and, I mean, there are other girls who have phones who would like, let her—”

“Yes,” Marie interjected “It really, it has to be her decision. We’ve seen her for almost a year. She has our number—”

Frankie continued: “You know it’s. Well, it’s. It’s like we want to step in and do everything for them. But, sometimes we just can’t until, until they are ready to do it. At which point that are ready, ready to call us. We do whatever we can.”

Marie affirmed Frankie’s logic: “And this kind of trafficking really does look different than other kinds of trafficking where it’s like—I don’t know.”

Questions about what constitutes human trafficking or exploitation have been the focus of extensive debate, among scholars and within the activist community. Abolitionist rhetoric collapses legal forms of adult entertainment with sex trafficking as a form of “modern-day slavery.” Likewise, questions about who counts as a victim or survivor are also contested within the abolitionist community itself. In interviews, some activists who participated in this project questioned survivor-leaders as illegitimate, at times even accusing them of “self-trafficking.” When referring to the residents of Shepard’s Park, volunteers from Spreading love frequently used the terms “human trafficking” and “lifestyle choice” interdependently, revealing a conceptual slippage.

Marie continued: “But there’s other things we’ve seen too. And it’s like you want to call the cops, or you wanna do something about it but—”

“Yeah,” Mark jumped in. “It’s really hard not to—I mean you just can’t. Even if someone came to pick them up, they might not go, probably would not go. They have our number, unless they don’t trust us yet.” He paused. “But yea, like the worst is when girls are beat up. That really hurts me a lot. I mean, they all hurt me. But that’s just really hard to drive away from, I guess?” His up-speak invited Marie and Frankie to interject but they sat silently, watching the streets pass out their windows. Mark continued, “But, I guess, well, I guess I just don’t know.” After an extended silence, Marie spoke up:

It is so hard to see that. But just from experience, of like, doing this long enough to, uh like—from past girls, it really doesn’t even benefit the girl for us to—like if we were just to pull her in the car right now and say, ‘We’ll take you right now’ it’s not even in her—it’s just not going to benefit her. It’s really not. Like, we’ve just seen so many girls where they’ll be crying and saying that they want to get off the streets. And then we are like ‘Well, here’s our card. Call us.’ And they are like, ‘But I gotta do this or that’ or ‘I’m not ready yet.’ Even though their life is like devastating and they know that they are being hurt and injured or what not. It’s sad and it’s hard to watch but I really believe that what we do is the best way to handle it. Like, we are there for them every single week. We’re so consistent. We continuously like, tell her, we love her. We tell her that we will be here for her and that we will help her. You know, it’s almost like how God pursues us, so we have to respond to that.

“Yes! That’s exactly it,” said Frankie:

It’s hard for me to hear stories like Angel ... but we have taken girls off the street. A lot of the girls that are regulars out here. They know we will, they know we are an option. And sometimes they make the choice and a week later, they choose to come back out, you know? But that is what Marie is talking about with the consistency. I mean, how many times have we taken Talia off the streets? And Laura? But we keep coming back for them and they know it. They know we will—they know we are an option. They know—They do know.

### **Godly Pursuit**

In a 2016 lecture at a Detroit anti-trafficking rally, the CEO of Spreading Love described her organization as having a "relational approach" to ministry. At her many speeches before large anti-trafficking events throughout Michigan, she promoted Spreading Love as a "street rescue"

organization that "saves lives." However, her invocation of abolitionist rescue rhetoric, a discourse that calls Christians to "rescue" victims of "modern-day slavery," belies the actual practices employed by Spreading Love's volunteers during outreach. She explains this by appealing to evangelical theology, emphasizing in sermons to church audiences, that, no matter what she or her volunteers do, Spreading Love "does not save people [because] only Jesus does that." And yet, when speaking with Angel, Spreading Love's volunteers do explicitly identify themselves as assuming the role of Christ: just "like God pursues" them, a pursuit to which they "must respond." All of which raises questions about who or what the intended object of outreach might be.

By telling Angel through prayer that God is "for her," Frankie's prayer echoes biblical scripture from the New Testament book of Romans.<sup>3</sup> However, when I later asked other volunteers what someone might have intended to communicate by using this phrase, I was told that it was more likely a reference to a then-popular Christian worship song. Released in 2014 through Sony by the self-described Canadian "Christian punk" band Hawk Nelson, the song Drops in the Ocean had, by 2017, was a staple of Sunday morning worship services at large nondenominational Protestant churches in the United States.<sup>4</sup> This song describes divine love and forgiveness as an intimate personal experience that begins with spiritual rebirth.

According to the songwriters, "More than the Drops in the Ocean" was intended to be written from "God's perspective" (Davis *N.d.*). Its lyrics<sup>5</sup> open with the following invitation: "I want you as you are, not as you ought to be. Won't you lay down your guard and come to Me" (K-LOVE 2014). The song then transitions to a passionate ballad. The refrain extolls the depth and breadth of God's capacity for forgiveness and love for humans: "If you want to know, how far my love can go, just how deep, just how wide." As the song progresses, its lyrics challenge

audience members to intimately engage with the resurrected Christ by way of a reference to the biblical New Testament narrative of the Apostle Thomas, who placed his fingers in the open wounds Jesus suffered during the crucifixion (John Chapter 20, verse 27). It then connects the practice of intimate personal engagement to the biblical promise of unconditional love and forgiveness. Members of the band explain that their goal was to communicate to their fans "that God sees each and every one of us and each of us matters to Him. We aren't overlooked or lost. We are seen and we are known," (Davis *N.d.*).

By incorporating a popular Christian song lyric in her prayer for Angel, Frankie is asserting evidence of the promise of a personal transformation that she believes Angel could experience if she were to "let down her guard" and intimately engage with Christ and, by extension, the ministry itself. By giving Angel a gift of her personal clothing, Marie reasserts this personal intimacy. As such, Frankie, Mark, and Marie's subsequent resistance to giving Angel immediate aid and their insistence that she must "call" them later merits consideration. Evangelical approaches to handling misconduct and improper behavior are grounded in theological concepts of sin, confession, redemption and forgiveness and Platonic ideals, which allow people to be disassociated from their past wrong actions under certain conditions. This approach is criticized for insulating serial abusers, such as 2017 Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore (Jarvie 2017). However, it is also important to consider how this dynamic benefits the individuals doing the forgiving: the god-like pursuers.

People's problems, their suffering, and the forgivable sins they commit represent a blessing to believers: an opportunity to enact that a god-like theology of compassion. Mark, Frankie, and Marie interpret Angel's claims that she doesn't have a phone not as a failure of their outreach protocol, but rather as evidence of her insufficient commitment to getting sober and to

leaving prostitution. (As Marie told me later, "She can always borrow a phone from another girl.") This failure does not detract from the spiritual work volunteers do during outreach. Rather it creates new opportunities for future pursuit.

In this way, "relational outreach" represents a linked chain of successive interactional frames. The length of the chain indexes the vigor of the relationship and the tenacity of the volunteer. By refusing requests of aid or deferring them to a future moment, volunteers were queuing up another frame of interaction, another link in the chain and another opportunity to enact the evangelical ritual of confession, redemption, and forgiveness.

Finally, to understand the broader significance of such practices, it is important to know that relative to these secular agencies<sup>6</sup> Christian organizations were significantly larger, boasting three to fifteen times more volunteers than non-Christian agencies that also dispatched volunteers to strip clubs or outdoor solicitation sites. Based on interviews with program directors, as well as a review of their volunteer rolls and email lists, I estimate that Christian outreach ministries collectively represented the significant majority of the direct intervention sex industry outreach volunteer force in the city. They were also more active. Christian ministries conducted outreach multiple times monthly, dispatching volunteers three to four times as frequently as their secular counterparts. They also enjoyed significantly more access at sites where sexual services were sold. All of which raises questions about the kind of intervention that victims of sexual exploitation in Detroit are most likely to receive.

At the time, Spreading Love was the only organization conducting regular outreach to sex workers and trafficking victims in the Shepard's Park neighborhood. The previous year, a large women's shelter, whose secular intervention program focused on harm reduction and public service referrals, had ended its outreach to the area due to an inability to establish contacts in the

area. When asked, this organization would immediately transport individuals to facilities where they could receive immediate intervention and medical aid. Despite offering free food, prophylactics, and needle bleach kits, the shelter's perceived ties to law enforcement and public health authorities, made many reluctant to engage them. In contrast, when the Spreading Love ministry drove through the area, it was, by large, welcome enthusiastically. On busy nights, residents swarmed the van in three-deep lines at each window asking for prayer and food. Moreover, while multiple churches in the area did interact with individuals on the street, they did so on very different terms. According to residents, one local pastor would carry out fire and brimstone preaching on the sidewalk, sermons which frequently devolved into insult-laden shouting matches between the church congregation and individuals on the street outside. In this context, Spreading Love's approach represented a welcome relief. It also meant that on any given evening, the intervention that a sex trafficking was most likely to receive was a snack and toiletry kit.

### **Conclusion**

Refusal was a phenomenon that I repeatedly observed during the course of my fieldwork. Research for this project included nearly three hundred hours of participant observation with volunteers from six evangelical ministries doing outreach at strip clubs and at outdoor solicitation sites in Detroit, Chicago, and Miami. During this time, I never witnessed volunteers transport outreach contacts. Nor did I observe volunteers explicitly encourage people to leave sex work. While volunteers assured me that they did sometimes transport people to drug rehabilitation facilities, they explained that they did so only under limited circumstances and never while conducting outreach.



Moreover, the closure of interactional frames was most often initiated by ministry volunteers, not the individuals who were the ostensibly targets of the ministry. Likewise, volunteers frequently refused to take up and engage topics or narratives that interlocutors introduced that emphasized illicit aspects of their lives; stories of substance abuse, extramarital sex, physical assault, or other criminal activities, which evangelical Christianity regards as vulgar or immoral: sin. In such cases, silence was a practice of refusal, which allowed volunteers to refrain from explicitly condemning people as sinners, while at the same time reducing the risk of normalizing their sinful acts and experiences. It also allowed volunteers to redirect interactions, reframing people's utterances as evidence that God was already actively intervening in their lives, no matter how bleak their present conditions might be.

Resisting removal is practical, designed to preserve the safety of ministry volunteers who might otherwise be tempted to take strangers into the cars. It also reflects the practical limits of ministerial intervention. Many individuals resist being removed to Christian shelters who enforce strict rules and who may lack the capacity to serve victims of this type. In this context, removal may be an untenable goal. Instead, when volunteers repeatedly return to the same sites and to the same individuals to pray with them and to distribute food and gifts, they establish trust by gathering information about victims, which future volunteers can use to initiate increasingly earnest interactions with them. This approach benefits the ministry. It is also grounded in evangelical theology. Christian evangelicalism mandates missionary outreach, investing power in the interaction while precluding the authority of missionaries themselves. ('Salvation' is reserved exclusively to the purview of the divine.) By deferring to a future point of contact, volunteers maximize the outreach framework over time, increasingly the likelihood of an authentic spiritual experience for victims and for themselves.

Instead, they defined successful outreach as that in which volunteers established trust with victims through repeated, and increasingly earnest encounters with the same individuals over time. In this context, ministerial success reflected not the number of individuals removed from exploitation, but more so by the number of times the ministry interaction with a particular individual.

## Notes to Chapter 7

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<sup>1</sup> A note on transcription: Rather than adhere to a conventional transcription style that analyzes utterances in a line-by-line format that is broken into consistent time segments of talk, in this chapter I have chosen to present a narrative dialogue in which I provide in-text descriptions of elements of speech. I have done so to increase accessibility for readers who are less familiar with the linguistic genre. I have also done so to avoid inaccuracies that might result from incomplete transcription. Due to loud ambient noise, at times, recording of talk was obscured by sounds inside and outside of the vehicle. Also, from my vantage point behind the driver, I was unable to track all paralinguistic cues at play in the interaction that took place on the passenger side of the vehicle. Rather than present dialogue in a formal transcription format, which may risk giving a false sense of thoroughness, I have opted for a relatively non-technical analysis. Readers who are interested in my approach to transcription should review subsequent chapter, "Redirection," in which I innovate a method of transcribing multiple simultaneous side interactions between different clusters of speakers that take place during in a single segment of activity.

<sup>2</sup> My use of the term "evangelical" points to a theological orientation and historical heritage that spans Protestant denominations and stresses biblical infallibility, monotheism, the mandate to evangelize non-Christians, apocalyptic eschatology, and spiritual unity among believers (Marsden 1980; National Association of Evangelicals *N.d.*)

<sup>3</sup> Biblical citations are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) translation including Romans 8:31 (NKJV): "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" and Romans 8:38-39 (NKJV): "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

<sup>4</sup> Rather than have worshipers sing from traditional hymnal books during Sunday services, such churches draw from the repertoire of popular Christian music; songs that churchgoers would be just as likely to hear in radio broadcasts or posted on Internet-based streaming platforms like YouTube. During such services, local church bands take the place of traditional choirs. They play the original instrumental scores and sing lead vocals while worshipers sing along from lyrics, which projected on large screens at the front of the church behind the band. All of which creates a concert-like atmosphere that is intended to encourage churchgoers to intimately and intimately engage with the theological message in fully embodied expressions of worship: dancing, raising their arms, and singing the chorus, ideally without restraint or inhibition.

5 Lyrics to the song "More than the Drops in the Ocean:"

I want you as you are not as you ought to be  
Won't you lay down your guard and come to me  
The shame that grips you now is crippling  
It breaks my heart to see you suffering  
'Cause I am for you  
I'm not against you  
If you wanna know how far my love can go  
Just how deep  
Just how wide  
If you wanna see how much you mean to me  
Look at my hands  
Look at my side  
If you could count the times I'd say you are forgiven  
It's more than the drops in the ocean, ooh ooh  
Don't think you need to settle for a substitute  
When I'm the only love that changes you  
And I am for you  
I'm not against you  
I am for you  
I'm not against you

If you wanna know how far my love can go  
Just how deep  
Just how wide  
If you wanna see how much you mean to me

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Look at my hands  
Look at my side  
If you could count the times I'd say you are forgiven  
It's more than the drops in the ocean  
Open your heart it's time that we start again, oh oh oh  
Open your heart it's time that we start again, oh oh oh  
If you wanna know how far my love can go  
Just how deep  
Just how wide  
If you wanna see how much you mean to me  
Look at my hands  
Look at my side  
If you could count the times I'd say you are forgiven  
It's more than the drops in the ocean, ooh ooh  
The drops in the ocean, whoa  
I am for you  
I'm not against you  
I am for you  
I'm not against you

<sup>6</sup> In Detroit, harm reduction outreach volunteers from secular organizations distributed food, condoms, and bleach kits for cleaning hypodermic needles. They also offered tips and strategies for self-protection, such as the surreptitious oral application of prophylactics to resistant customers' members via a condom tucked in the inner cheek. (Indeed, along with criminal background check, recommendation letters, and a negative tuberculosis test, one harm reduction organization required prospective volunteers to demonstrate their ability to place a condom onto a "condom demonstrator;" a wooden penis model, without the use of their hands, before it would send them in the outreach van.) And, when asked, they immediately transported people in crisis to locations where they could receive emergency services and housing, including within their own organizations. Indeed, two were multi-service providers with emergency and long-term shelter facilities.

## CHAPTER VIII

### **‘You Must Love the Trafficker:’ Redirection in Outreach**

“You aren’t prepared to do this work until you are prepared to love the trafficking as much as you love the victim.” – Lindsey Fisher, CEO All Worth of Love (AWOL)

Located on a busy Detroit thoroughfare, the Devil’s Den occupied a single-story cement block structure next door to the now-demolished Detroit American Lodge Motel. A back-lit neon sign illuminated type of business conducted therein. A well-endowed devil-horned female silhouette bent forward exposing a forked-tailed bare bottom under the words “Sophisticated Adult Entertainment.” The phrase was ironic, given the Den’s history of sanitation code violations. According to online reviews, the club’s discount prices compensated for its crumbling infrastructure. Despite the rough environs, volunteers from the ministry Mary’s Miracles approached the Devil’s Den with confidence, assured of a positive, if sullen, welcome from the floor manager “Jack.”

On this particular night, Jack nursed a broken tooth, a casualty, he said, of a recent fist fight. The wad of gauze he held to his chin made him a particularly sympathetic character. Jack had lost his job during a recent wave of downsizing in the Detroit auto industry. His struggle to

secure long-term employment eventually landed him at the Den. Barely a year in, the work had taken its toll; Jack experienced his first heart attack before age fifty. Knowing that the ministry visited the Den, Jack's wife would sometimes call in to speak with them. In the dimly lit entryway, the women huddled over Jack's cell phone, praying together for God to "create an opening" so that Jack could "minister" to "the girls."

After briefly expressing our condolences for Jack's injury, we walked swiftly to the backroom. A sparse beaded curtain separated the dancers' dressing area from the main floor. Naomi and I hastily arranged long stem roses on the faded vanity counter as Sarah and Anne removed plastic wrap from paper plates filled with cookies: snickerdoodles, peanut butter, and oatmeal raisin. Still thawing, they were baked and frozen earlier that month by the ministry's short-lived "Baking for Bouncers" sub-committee: a trio of women who attended Mary's Miracles' bible study but who did not participate in outreach.

Flowers arranged and cookies in hand, we circulated in pairs on the main floor. Those familiar with the ministry eagerly consumed them on the spot. Others were politely wary.<sup>1</sup> Across the room, a middle-aged white man waived us over. Shouting over the music, "Kevin" demanded we give him "a cookie too" on the grounds that he "owned" the club. Our team leader Naomi quickly crossed the roughly forty-foot distance to the tables that lined the wall where he sat, matching his playful enthusiasm. With a large happy smile, she thrust a plate towards Kevin's face.

With an expression of surprise that bordered on terror, Kevin pulled back abruptly. After pausing to collect himself, he asked skeptically: "Ok then. How much do I owe you?"

Laughing, Naomi waived her hand, dismissively telling him that the cookies were “free.” “We are Christians,” she explained, “from the Christian ministry Mary’s Miracles.”

Kevin changed tactics: “So then tell me, what did you *lace* them with?”

As if on cue, our group cried out in unison: “Love! We laced them with LOVE!”

Kevin burst out laughing. Nearby customers looked over in alarm.

Shaking his head, Kevin rose from his chair, signaled for the men and women at the adjacent table to vacate their seats, and extended his arm towards the now empty chairs in an overdramatized gesture of invitation. As we settled in, Kevin re-aligned his own chair to face us at an angle. Seated with his back to the wall, Kevin’s position afforded him an unobstructed view of the club’s entrance and main stage, allowing him to maintain access to all nearby conversations. Kevin turned his lower body towards the ministry volunteers (on his left) but he kept his shoulders open, torqueing his upper body to his right towards the table where his previous companions sat looking on.

### **Chapter Summary**

As volunteers with a Christian anti-sex trafficking outreach ministry, Naomi, Anne, and Sarah visited the Devil’s Den as part of a larger effort to minister to people working in sexually oriented businesses, which they believe to be inherently exploitative. This preceding ethnographic vignette occurred at the beginning of a lengthy evangelizing interaction, which this chapter analyzes in order to explore questions of ethical stance. Over two hours, starting inside the Den and continuing later in the parking lot outside, the volunteers console, challenge, and reassure “Kevin,” a man whom they understood to be both financially profiting from the business and also suffering from it.

Kevin initially identified himself as an “investor” in the Den. Indeed, according to business filings with the State of Michigan, the Devil’s Den was the working name of a corporation that had been authorized to issues common stock shares since 1998. In course of the interaction, it also appeared that Kevin profited from the club in another way: as a venue for conducting illegal drug transactions. More salient for the volunteers was the fact that Kevin presented himself as being in the midst of personal and spiritual life crisis: conflicted about his source of income and thus receptive to evangelization. The volunteers’ approach to proselytizing Kevin—which was time-consuming and involved personal self-disclosures—neither condemned Kevin as a trafficker (as their Christian affiliation might predict) nor condone his business as a site of legitimate labor (as might be expected from a sex-positive feminist perspective). Instead, their statements largely focused on encouraging Kevin to view himself as a “good man” despite his actions.

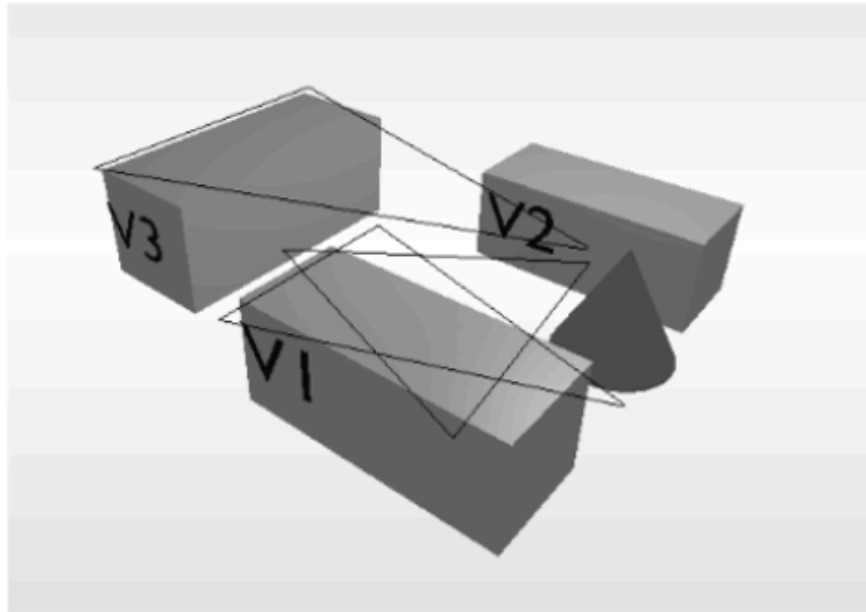
Anti-trafficking missionaries who minister to individuals whom they take to be potential human traffickers, raise myriad ethical questions. To understand this puzzle, this chapter draws on approaches ethical orientation as a primarily intersubjective phenomenon. Drawing on linguistic anthropological methods for tracking how ethical stance emerges in face-to-face interaction, this chapter analyzes how the volunteers attempt to draw out Kevin’s nascent religiosity and his ambivalence about his involvement with the Den and criminal activities that occur therein, in order to redirect that sentiment towards personal spiritual transformation. By focusing specifically on practices of redirection in the outreach interactional framework, this chapter builds on and extends previous chapters on attenuation (Chapter 6) and deferral (Chapter 7). Likewise, it unpacks a central contradiction in outreach. Namely, how do evangelical anti-



trafficking missionaries enact their mandate to “love the trafficker” as much as they “love the victim?”

This chapter begins by reviewing critical feminist literature on the anti-trafficking movement in concert with evangelical theological precepts. It argues that broad evangelical values of “reconciliation,” as well as specific mandates to “love the trafficker,” function as contravening discourses to “abolitionism.” In particular, it argues that such values call for a revision of “carceral gender justice,” which is one of the dominant theoretical frameworks currently engaged in critical anti-trafficking scholarship. Carceral feminism describes the punitive approach advocated by Christian-influenced anti-human trafficking policy and rhetoric. This chapter re-examines the carceral gender justice framework in light of the evangelical ethics that emerge from the ethnographic analysis of face-to-face interaction during outreach. This chapter then turns to the stream of interaction at the Devil’s Den that was initiated in the proceeding ethnographic vignette. In doing so, this chapter summarizes selected linguistic anthropological literature on ethical intersubjectivity, frame analysis and face-to-face interaction. Drawing heavily from methods of conversation analysis and other approaches for analyzing face-to-face interaction, this chapter explores subjectivity as a situationally emergent phenomena. This discussion outlines the stakes of this ethnographic encounter, including the physical setting and the participant framework by analyzing a transcript of the interaction that occurs outside in the parking lot. This analysis tracks how the volunteers and Kevin cooperate interactionally to assert his moral virtue, despite his actions, which appear to suggest otherwise. Specifically, a series of concurrent side conversations in which Kevin turns to engage his associates in a series of intersecting, but otherwise distinct, frames of interaction.

**Figure 10. Frames of Interaction at Clubs Devil's Den Parking Lot**



Interaction #1 includes: Naomi and Volunteers (including Researcher) who stand near/are seated within Naomi's vehicle (V1). Interaction #2 includes: Kevin (cone), Naomi and Volunteers (including Researcher). Interaction #3 includes: Kevin (cone) who is standing between Kevin's vehicle (V2) and Naomi's Vehicle (V1) as well as Kevin's associates (including Davey) who are seated within/standing near Kevin's vehicle (V2) and Kevin's Associates' vehicle (V3).

This chapter presents its analysis in the form of a transcript (Appendix D). This transcript divides this segment of ethnographic activity into three concurrent frames of interaction that involve three distinct but overlapping participant configurations: volunteers and Kevin; Kevin and his business associates; and the volunteers speaking among themselves. (See figures 10 and 18.) It approaches Kevin's multiple side conversations (or "out of frame" interactions) as affordances that offer essential information input for participants: for volunteers who are attempting to evaluate Kevin's mental state and for Kevin, as he attempts to discern the volunteers' stance towards his actions and the strip club environment in general. Focusing on

what I refer to as “frame crossing activity,” this chapter tracks how the volunteers and Kevin attend to and move across these multiple concurrent intersecting frames of interaction. Body torque, cooperation, responsibility, frame shifting, and participant roles are key features analyzed. Taking up the relatively underdeveloped literature on cross-frame interaction, this chapter explores how participants interpret, take up, and suppress proximal interaction. It also explores potential strategies for transcribing such activity.

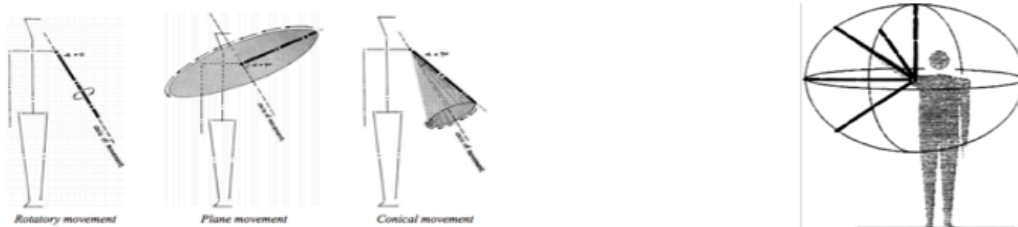
This chapter presents a method for noting the deployment and resolution of body torque within linguistic transcription. To do so, it adapts the Eshkol Wachman Movement Notation (EWMN), which provides sphere coordinate notations that designate bodily alignment. Originally developed in 1958 for use in choreography (Eshkol 1958), EWMN has been adopted in computer animation, healthcare, and other fields in which the precise notation of movements is desired (Aoki *et al* 2006; Eaton 1992; Teitelbaum 2004). The EWMN framework divides the body into a series of intersecting vertices. The body is conceptualized as existing as moving within a segmented sphere, which is divided into horizontal and vertical planes. Plane segments are numbered 0 to 7. The EWMN system affords 26 possible coordinates for body parts within the sphere, each of which is expressed in a (x/y) notation.

**Figure 11. EWMN System (Drewes 2016)**



EWMN also describes various types of movement. Bodily position is represented in a series of single notations in any vertex or group of vertices, which are assigned relative positions in the horizontal and vertical plane. EWMN notations appear in the following format: N (y/x). Here “N” designates the specific body part, “x” represents the movement on the horizontal plane, and “y” designates the degree of movement on the vertical plan identified by x.

**Figure 12. Arm Movement in EWMN (Eshkol and Harries *Nd*)**



Three types of EWMN Axis of Movement: Plane, Conical, Rotator.

Movement of the arm illustrated as EWMN coordinates on the surface of sphere.

EWMN provides methodological benefits to scientific analysis of gesture because it is less subject to stylistic interpretations and generates simple numerical notations that are easily adapted as input coordinates for computer and transcript systems (Aoki *et al* 2006). One drawback is its complexity. While the way that EWMN conceptualizes position in physical space is largely intuitive, the numerical description of spatial relations may deter readers who prefer narrative description. EWMN coordinates are primarily intended to identify spatial relations between body parts and distinguish absolute and relative positions based on a shared point of reference, which is, default, noted from perspective from the subject who is deploying the body, However, the notation could easily be adapted to capture position and movement from the perspective of other participants in the interaction.

The discussion in this chapter extends anthropological theories about the interactionally emergent quality of ethical subjectivity. It also contributes to the growing body of literature on Christian anti-trafficking efforts, which has largely focused on religious actors' participation in "carceral gender justice" paradigms—laws and policy that couple traditional gender ideologies with punitive measures for commercial sex consumers (Bernstein 2007, 2010, 2012)—with little insight into the thousands of face-to-face interactions that occur between Christian abolitionists and the targets of their efforts. The discussion in this chapter complicates existing scholarly understandings the gender ideologies that underlie Christian anti-trafficking activist by documenting the ways that volunteers sympathize and cooperative with men who profit from women who sell sexual services.

### **You Must Love the Trafficker**

The quote that opens this chapter was recorded at a public talk by Lindsey Fischer, the CEO of the Christian anti-trafficking outreach group All Worth of Love (AWOL); Christian street outreach ministry that deploys teams of volunteers to distribute food and hygiene products and to pray with individuals who are involved in trading sex for drugs or money in Detroit. Known for its highly organized structure and large volunteer base, AWOL enjoys a prominent reputation in Michigan's evangelical Christian community. Fischer vets AWOL applicants accordingly.

In the course of this research project, I met many activists who confided to me that the ministry had rejected their applications. As part of the on boarding process, prospective AWOL volunteers must write essays, undergo multiple interviews and agree to abide by a set of behavioral standards for the duration of their service with the ministry. While this list of expectations primarily contained practical statements pertaining to punctuality and

communication procedures, the volunteer “contract” also included a values statement: “During outreach, volunteers will conduct themselves in a way reflects AWOL’s Christian values and mission.”

Standing before a large church audience, Fischer addressed those who may have been considering joining AWOL’s outreach team. Stern, straight-faced and urgent, she challenged her supporters:

I’m going to say something that might surprise you. I mean, it surprised me. The thing about this work is that you aren’t prepared to do this work until you are prepared to love the trafficker as much as you love the victim. Can you do that? Do you really think you can do that? Because traffickers and victims, we are all trapped in the same web of sin. We are all trapped in the same web of sin. Until you can see that, until you can really see that, you aren’t ready to do this work.

When she said this, Fischer was speaking in her capacity as the manager of an organization that deploys prayer vans to Detroit neighborhoods associated with high rates of prostitution. However, the sentiment she invokes also applies to Christian ministries that do direct outreach in other types of sites where sexual services are sold, such as: Beloved, Eve’s Angels, Jesus Said Love, Pole Gems, Strip Church (*see* Appendix A).

Similar to Mary’s Miracles, Eve’s Angels is another Michigan-based ministry that carries direct outreach in strip clubs and adult entertainment venues. Founded in 2009 by survivor leader activist and author Anny Donnewald, Eve’s Angels is a Michigan-based anti-trafficking outreach organization that seeks to bring “light and love to women trapped in the sex industry.” As of January 2017, Eve’s Angels managed one hundred fifty volunteers across Florida, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, including in Detroit where they maintained a regular monthly presence at two-thirds of the city’s strip clubs.<sup>2</sup> Although the group has discontinued its outreach programs in order to focus its efforts on developing a transitional housing program for women existing sex

work, Eve's Angels is most well-known for its multi-state strip club ministry program. In contrast to some other Christian strip club ministries, which staged protests outside of adult entertainment venues Eve's Angels emphasized the need to evangelize within these locales.<sup>3</sup>

In a 2016 promotional video posted to YouTube, volunteers from Eve's Angels' chapter in Tampa explained the Biblical roots of their outreach. Dressed in black street clothes and standing in a brick walled alley, five women with well-coiffed hair stressed spiritual and historical urgency of their mission. Alternating phrases between them, they sternly delivered the following call to action (Eve's Angels 2016):

**Figure 13. Eve's Angels Outreach Promo (Eve's Angels 2016)**



1. '[Jesus said] It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick have not come to call the righteous, but the sinners' ...
2. It is time that we as a church leave the comfort of the church pews and
3. be the church to those who are hurting and lost.

This integration of Biblical scripture (line 1) with social justice action in urban settings resonates with broader shifts in the way that American evangelical orient themselves to the public sphere (see Bielo 2011; Flory 2016; Chapter 4 current manuscript).<sup>4</sup> What is significant

for the current discussion is exactly who is conceptualized as “hurting and lost” during outreach and how they come to be framed in this way.

When the leaders of Christian outreach organizations challenge their volunteers to “love traffickers as much as they love victims” they are offering practical advice. They are also unhinging the chain of intention and responsibility that underpins dominant approaches to anti-trafficking policy. In particular, so-called “demand reduction” policies. That is, policies which couple rehabilitative programs for individuals who provide sexual services (mostly women) with punitive measures for those who consume them (mostly men) (Weitzer 2010; Yen 2007). While the gender ideologies underlying demand reduction approaches do indeed dovetail with traditional conservative views of masculinity—views that assert that men are more susceptible to base desires and thus must be controlled—the practices of Christian anti-trafficking outreach on the ground complicate this narrative.<sup>5</sup>

Like other abolitionists, Christian anti-sex trafficking intervention programs condemn prostitution, sexually oriented businesses, and other forms of transactional sex. However, outreach programs that emphasized spiritual reconciliation as the primary mechanism to eliminate human trafficking conceptualized sexual trafficking as a “sin.” When viewed through the lens of evangelical theology, all forms of remunerative sexuality (including sex trafficking) produced morally toxic effects for all parties involved including those who profited from the sexual of sexual services, those who purchased them, and those who provided them (consenting or not).

As noted in Chapter 6, during outreach, volunteers with anti-trafficking outreach ministries practice strategic attenuation: ignoring some elements in the commercial sex environment while calling attention to others. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 7, Christian anti-



trafficking outreach ministries that publicly assert abolitionist rescue rhetoric, do not, during outreach, remove women from exploitative situations. Neither do they employ punitive rhetoric to criticize the male consumers of purveyors of sexual services that they meet. Indeed, the ability to capture the attention of such men, and compassionately evangelize to them, was lauded as a ministerial success. This suggests the existence of a contravening discourse in Christian abolitionism that has remained largely unanalyzed in the growing field of critical anti-trafficking studies. Specifically, a theology of “grace” coupled with a mode of proselytizing that stresses reconciliation: religious conversion.

Driven by a moral system in which all individuals are potentially virtuous regardless of their past “sin,” and seeking to distance themselves from other church groups who visited commercially oriented business or street based solicitation sites primarily for the purpose of protesting them,<sup>6</sup> volunteers from the anti-trafficking outreach ministries that I observed insisted that the most effective way to end human trafficking was to spiritually reconcile individuals in the commercial sex industry to the Christian faith. The proliferation of anti-trafficking outreach ministries like these suggests the need for a new approach to understanding Christian anti-sex trafficking movement. Specifically, a conceptual framework that does not take evangelicalism merely as a system of moral values, but rather approaches it as an ethical project, which entails constant semiotic practices of reflexive self-evaluation through which evangelicals collectively and explicitly attempt to transform themselves and others.

This conceptual framework presented in this chapter begins with the premise that ethical orientation is most productively understood as an intersubjective phenomenon, not an individual one. It then draws on linguistic anthropological methods for tracking how ethical stance emerges in face-to-face interaction. By analyzing conversational data recorded during Christian outreach

in the sex industry, this chapter also contributes to the Anthropology of Christianity and the growing field of Critical Anti-Trafficking Studies; exploring the limits of the evangelical reconciliatory ethic and documenting an alternative gender paradigm at work in contemporary Christian abolitionism. It also engages more universal questions of human agency, responsibility, and blame. By enacting a theological mandate to “love the trafficker” as much as they “love the victims,” the individuals represented in this chapter are also engaging broader questions about what it means to be ethical: agency, responsibility, and blame.

### **Intersubjectivity and Ethical Affordances within the Devil’s Den**

For two hours, while seated with us inside at the Devil’s Den and also later, while standing next to our vehicle in the parking lot outside, Kevin narrated defining episodes in his life: a short-lived hockey career, his pending divorce and child custody battle, his fraught relationship with his zealous Catholic grandparents which spurred him to reject Christianity as teen, and his lack of personal fulfillment despite his financial success. All of which the volunteers capitalized on to introduce themes of faith and religion.

Paying scant attention, the Den dancers who hovered on the periphery, the volunteers insisted to Kevin such episodes were evidence of his readiness for “change.” They cooed over cell phone pictures of his children and his recent construction project (Kevin told us he was a cement contractor). Anne nodded approvingly at the quality of his work: “See? You are a father and a talented artist. Look at the gifts God blessed you with!” He responded by affecting the role of a magnanimous host.

Kevin praised the volunteers for being “good” and “beautiful Christians” and sought to assert familiarity with them. Insisting that he knew Naomi from his childhood, Kevin listed

increasingly personal details of his childhood in the hope that she might recognize what he believed to be their shared history. When Naomi apologetically corrected him that “No,” they had never met, Kevin attempted to close the gap in another way. He invited the entire ministry and their families to his home; a BBQ at his Detroit River marina, a stone’s throw from the Canadian border.

Throughout this interaction, Kevin periodically paused, turned away from the volunteers and towards his associates. His previous companions, a trio of large and imposing looking men, sat to his right, looking on silently from the periphery, indicating their attention to our conversation with appropriately times smiles and nods. A steady stream of men entered the adjacent frame, handed Kevin cash and jewelry. All of which the volunteers directly observed but appeared to ignore. At one point, a younger man walked through the club’s front entrance clutching fists full of what appeared to be large gold curb chains, which he placed ceremoniously around Kevin’s neck. Kevin smiled and waived him away. He removed the garish yellow metal and then, frowning soberly, he folded the chains inside his sweatshirt and place the package on a chair, which he pushed under the adjacent table.

Struck by the audacity of the gesture, I pointed to the now hidden jewelry and asked him, “Oh C’mon. Are those for real?” Kevin dismissed me amicably. Without making eye contact, he instructed me to “just ignore that” before pivoting quickly back towards the rest our group. When Kevin turned back towards our table, he and the volunteers immediately reinitiated the evangelizing frame of interaction.

“Kevin,” Naomi said, looking directly into his now smiling face, “you are a good man.” Sighing, Kevin took a deep breath and averted his eyes: “I dunno about that.” Looking up, he raised his voice, “But what I do know is that I need to just sit by water with good people who can

explain all this God stuff to me. That's what I need in my life, like right now." Hesitating, Sarah suggested "How about you come to us instead? Come to Bible Study?" Kevin laughed and wagged his finger playfully in Sarah's direction, "Ahhh you a tricky one." Our group laughed in unison. As did Kevin's companions who attended to our conversation a few feet away, looking over his shoulder.

Observing this scene, I was struck by the way that Kevin maintained his focus on the volunteers and how the volunteers maintained their focus on him, seeming to ignore other elements of the semiotic field in the immediate environment; elements that signaled that Kevin was complicit in the strip club business. This contradicted normative expectations about the sexual, political, gender and class-based dynamics that occur in strip club settings and in evangelical Christian ones. It also required the participants to exert a significant amount of effort to maintain alignment in order to sustain the interaction. Kevin and the volunteers were quick to repair the multiple potential breeches in alignment and face threatening acts (FTAs). They also cooperatively managed potentially contradictory visual inputs and outside interactions from outside the immediate frame in order to sustain their conversation as proselytizing "as usual." In this case, their strategic disattention to out-of-frame information in the immediate setting (including concurrent interactions and side conversations) was part of a greater effort to align, Kevin and the Volunteers construct him as a virtuous "good man."

Dominant social theoretical models posit that the processes by which individuals determine what it means to be "a good person" are either largely intrinsic — a product of individual rational capacity (Kant) — or extrinsic — emerging from a discursive system in which the individual is always already-consisted as an ethical subject (Foucault). Driven by

practical concerns about the need to determine intention (consent), to assign responsibility (juridical), or to quantify public attitude (survey research), descriptive and applied studies idealize ethical capacity as an individuated process that produce internally homogenous effects. Heterogeneity, ambiguity, or situational variability in an individual's ethical stance is thus attributed to personal deficiency (hypocrisy, deceit, mental illness) or inadequate research design (inability to isolate and account for situational variables).

However, anthropological studies suggest that ethical capacity is more productively understood as intersubjective. Ethical capacity, like all presentations of the self, is indexical, emergent in the process by which speakers evaluate and locate themselves within relation to hearers, utterances, and narrated events within time and space (Du Bois 2007; Silverstein 1976 and 2014). This should not be confused with an argument for situational moral relativity. Rather, one's ability to recognize and present oneself as a "good" or "bad" person is only possible given human being's cognitive capacity for shared intentionality (Tomasello 2014). This framework has methodological implications for the sites in which ethics are best investigated. Specifically, it posits that ethical subjectivity emerges in the various micro-processes through which interlocutors manage contradiction and inconsistency in quotidian encounters (Lambek 2015), especially those that occur in the context of broader social movements which mandate that individuals take up ethically consistent lives, such as religion (Keane 2014 and 2015). While not all interactions are invested with equal ethical weight (Lempert 2013), the concept of intersubjectivity is, at its core, a framework for understanding distinct moral dilemmas.

Linguistic anthropologist Jane Hill credits Russian Semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin with identifying the central question to the study of responsibility in discourse: "the moral choice required of the speaker among the terminus and linguistic possibilities presented by the

‘heteroglossia’ of any community of speakers,” (Hill 1995, 97). While Bakhtin, like Hill, wrote of a multilingual community (19th century Russian peasants and their 20th century Mexican counterparts accessed an array of dialects as they moved through their weeks: church, home, and market) his framework accounts for the multiplicity of internal voices “which is a pervasive feature of ordinary interaction and selfhood,” (Keane 2011, 167). In his pre-WWII analysis of “dialogism” in literature, Bakhtin destabilized the innate link between the subject and the person. For Bakhtin, intersubjectivity was an inherent feature of language qua thought. Words, like ideas, are always already constituted in terms of their alternatives, the monological voice simply representing a “convention of expression” (Bakhtin 1984(1929), 88). According to Bakhtin:

[The idea] is not a subjective individual-psychological formulation with a 'permanent residence' in a person's head; no, the idea is interindividual and intersubjective ... a living event which is played out in the point where two or more consciousnesses meet ... Like the word, the idea wants to be heard, understood, and 'answered' by other voices from other positions. (Bakhtin 1984(1929), 88)

As the platform from which the ethical self emerges, discursive interaction, including conversational speech, merits special analytical attention. Responding to and extending Marx’s dialectical framework, Bakhtin rejected the Marxist abstract notions ideology as a transcendent force. Instead he advanced a “behavioral” framework in which “ideology is manifest and created in the practical material activity speech behavior,” (Stewart 1983, 276). For Bakhtin, while the socioeconomic base is determined, ideology is “an area of conflict: one’s speech both reveals and produces one’s position in class society, in such a way, moreover, as to set into dialogue the relations among the classes,” (*ibid.*)

As speakers animate themselves or others in recalled narratives, or situationally switch between dialectical codes, they are simultaneously constrained and enabled by indexical force.

Pragmatic meaning both originates in usage and precedes the user, distributed in the speech community and among interlocutors, diffusing tacit assumptions, responsibilities, and understandings; what contemporary anthropological studies ethics refer to as “affordance” (Keane 2015). The metaphysical concept of “affordances” describes the open-ended way that objects and processes (be they physical, psychological, or social) invite subjects operate with, on, or through them in some ways and not others. Affordances are situationally variable but not arbitrary; inherently open-ended in their potentiality but constrained by cultural systems, personal and collective memory, and the physical laws of the natural world. For Keane (2014 and 2015), the social dynamics of conversation is a primary source of ethical affordances: Verbal interaction is not merely an arena within which character is established or challenged, recognition offered or denied. It is also the preeminent site where people may demand explicit reasons and accountings of one another or provide them. (Keane 2014:17)

Upon encountering a social situation, an individual may choose to act in any number of ways. However, in order for a particular course of action to be construed as ethical, she must attend to context and evaluate the intentions of her interlocutors, whether consciously or not (Keane 2014:5).

Studies that inform the framework of interactional ethics include those that attend to “high stakes” grammatical features, such as those that mark relative participant status (Agha 2007), directness, (Shoaps 2009) and speaker intention (Robbins 2008a and 2008b; Schieffelin 2008), and studies of the interaction order in segments of activity where participant face is at stake<sup>7</sup>: turn allocation (Ochs and Taylor 1995; Schegloff 1977), conversational repair (Schegloff 2006), evaluation and stance (Du Bois 2007; Irvine 2001, 1993; Schieffelin 1987), and frame shifts in (Goffman 1981; Hill 1995). In such moments, the relationships between participants, voices, and contexts are construed, reconfigured, and re-aligned in ways that potentially impact

speakers' or hearers' public and self-facing presentations. One such affordance is the triangular pattern of evaluation and alignment.

In his 2007 essay on the "Stance Triangle," Du Bois builds on his previous work on stance (2001) to outline a framework for analyzing how indexical force and pragmatic action enable speakers to orient themselves in ethically meaningful ways. Stance is a social action, which entails activities of evaluation and alignment. In semiotic terms, when social actors express opinions, predictions, or other verbal reactions, what they are doing is positioning themselves in relation to other signs, such as agentive subjects (themselves or other speakers) or objects (things, ideas, utterances, etc.) In the interest of analytical simplicity, Du Bois presents readers with a series of excerpts from interactions in which two speakers (subjects) opine about a mutually identified sign (object). This allows Du Bois to conceptualize stance as a triangle of interaction that involves three nodes: Stance Subject 1, Stance Subject 2, and Stance Object. The nodes are in turn linked by vectors of social action which are two-way (Subject-to-Subject alignment) and unidirectional (Subject-to-Object positioning and evaluation) (2007:163).

Pragmatically, stance involves the production of iconically resonating elements across speaker terms. For example, words, phrases, or grammatical forms that speakers produce, repeat, challenge, or otherwise take up in order to position themselves in relation. According to Du Bois, the vectors of evaluation, positing, and alignment can thus be traced by graphing iconically resonating elements in the lexo-grammatical field. To track how the stance triangle manifests in conversation, Du Bois introduces a diagraphic model for transcribing speech. In the "diagraph," Du Bois aligns iconically resonating elements vertically in columns across rows that are labeled by speaker to identify the participants that enact the dialogic resonance in question (DuBois 2007:160). This framework provides a simple model for analyzing how speaker alignment is



worked out over time, across utterances through conversation. Moreover, by foregrounding how subjects position themselves in relation to one another vis-a-vis the evaluation of stance objects, the diagraph offers a simple model for documenting how sociocultural value emerges in interaction.

The speech in the following diagraph is excerpted from a transcript of the interaction between the volunteers and Kevin that occurred in the parking lot of the Devil's Den. Speakers are Kevin and the volunteers Naomi, Anne, and Sarah. Speaker utterances are formatted in columns to call attention to the iconically resonating elements in their speech. The order of their talk is displayed left to right. (In the interest of analytical simplicity, speech overlaps are not marked.) In this diagraph, the Stance Object is the quality of being a good person, which is iconically represented as "being beautiful." The Stance Subjects include Kevin, the volunteers, and the dancers at the Den, whom the volunteers had come to evangelize. By including non-speaker subjects, I have modified Du Bois' diagraphic form. In Du Bois' idealized formulation, Stance Subjects correlate with Speakers one-to-one. Here I have adapted the Stance Subject column here to include the various subjects who are being positioned or evaluated in terms of their virtue ("beauty").

**Figure 14. “Being Beautiful”- Segment of Outreach Interaction (transcript excerpt)**

Turn	Speaker	Stance Subject	Position/ Evaluates	Stance Object	Aligns
1.	Kevin:	<i>You guys</i>	<i>are way too</i>	<i>beautiful</i>	<i>to bring yourself to the hood, like here. You know what I mean?</i>
2.	Naomi:				<i>Oh tcb.</i>
3.	Anne:	<i>They [dancers]</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>beautiful</i>	<i>Nah. This is what it's about, right? too.</i>
4.	Sarah:	<i>They</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>beautiful</i>	<i>Yeab. too.</i>
5.	Kevin:	<i>I I</i>	<i>know. mean —</i>		
6.	Naomi	<i>You You</i>	<i>'re 're a</i>	<i>beautiful. good guy.</i>	<i>And</i>

During outreach, dancers and volunteers commonly complemented one another by remarking on their "beauty." This first struck me as odd. When used in the context of sexual oriented business, the descriptor "beautiful women" is generally understood to be an explicit evaluation of sexual attractiveness, an index of women's earning potential that often correlates with youthful appearance; new dancers, like young dancers, are generally understood to be more desirable. However, when invoked in relation to outreach volunteers (by others to describe them or by themselves to describe others), the phrase "beautiful women" indexed an alternative system of value. Volunteers were interpersonally generous yet sexually unavailable. In the strip club setting, volunteers' pursuit of non-remunerative yet emotionally intimate interactions provided the appearance of authentic vulnerability. All of which contrasted with the public face and "bounded intimacy" that those working in the strip club environment generally sought to cultivate while at work (*c.f.* Bernstein 2007 and Chapter Four, present text). When Kevin tells

the volunteers that they are "too beautiful" to be "here" (Figure 14, line 1), he positions them as outsiders by contrasting their appearance and goals (as he understands them) to the remunerative hyper sexuality and transactional dynamics that characterize most encounters that occur in the strip club setting. He also responds to a question that he repeatedly poses in the preceding lines of the transcript: What does it mean to be a Christian? (See lines 10, 23, and 101 in the transcript Appendix D).

In describing the volunteers as "beautiful," Kevin defines an ethical ideal. Namely, that the volunteers are beautiful because of what they do: coming "here" to the Devil's Den to do outreach. In line one (figure 14) the Stance Object phrase "[being] beautiful" is an icon that signifies positive ethical value. The volunteers respond by deflecting Kevin's evaluation and by redirecting this attribution to others. They tell him that the dancers "beautiful too." They then expand that category to the strip club owners broadly by telling Kevin, "You're beautiful too." In the context of the interaction order, the volunteers realign the ethical stance in multiple ways. By redirecting Kevin's compliment to others, the volunteers challenge Kevin's attempt to position them as outsiders. However, more interesting to the present analysis is how the volunteers express an alternative understanding of the ethical order.

Without condoning remunerative sexuality (which would contradict their abolitionist stance), the volunteers assert that financially profiting from the strip club does not preclude Kevin (or others) from being "beautiful." To do this, the volunteers modify the Stance Object that Kevin introduced. By taking up the phrase "beautiful," they reformulate the indexical order. According to the volunteers, "being beautiful" does not signify a person's ethical action. Rather, it signifies one's cosmological position, which is guaranteed in the theology of grace. In the lines immediately following the excerpt above, Kevin asks the volunteers to "teach [him] something

outside of Southwest Detroit.” To which Naomi emphatically responds by telling Kevin that he is “a good man [because he is] a precious child of God,” (transcript line 101 Appendix D). In this formation, Kevin’s ethical disfluencies (a “good person” who is also the owner of a strip club) parallel his pragmatic disfluencies: erratic speech, profane language, and constant interpretations). All of which are, in turn, understood to be signs of his willingness to be evangelized.

This chapter follows the volunteers as they proselytize to Kevin at the Devil’s Den. By tracking this interaction, this analysis illustrates how the Christian theology of “grace” operates as a possible contravening discourse to evangelical anti-sex trafficking abolitionism in the context of face-to-face outreach interaction. In doing so, this analysis calls into question previous studies, which analyze the Christian anti-trafficking movement as an extension of the carceral feminist framework. To understand this, it is important to understand the significance of the Christian theology of “grace.”

### **Grace and the Limits of Carceral Feminism**

Writing in 423 AD in the Northeast corner of the country now known as Algeria, the Roman Bishop Augustine of Hippo directed the nuns of the city to assume the following attitude when disciplining their wanton sisters: “*cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum*,” “with love of the sinner and hatred of the sin,” (Letter 211, Paragraph 11 in Page et. al. 1930: 392-93).<sup>8</sup> Augustine’s fifth century rebuke of flirtatious monastics, and its contemporary variation “love the sinner but hate the sin,” enjoins Christians to adopt a sororal and sympathetic spirit when managing transgressors. The phrase has also been invoked in ways that reify religious intolerance, especially against sexual minorities; a pernicious summation of conservative

Christian hypocrisy vested in the contradiction of a vengeful and loving god.<sup>9</sup> Although it does not appear in the Bible, by the early 18th century, the aphorism's entrenchment in popular Christian discourse was attributed to the spread of Dutch Reformed Theology. According to Scottish Minister Edward Irving,

It is one of the sayings of that wretched Arminianism, with which this land is overflowed, 'Hate the sin, but love the sinner,' What mean they? That sin is something by itself, and the sinner something by himself, so distinct from one another that one may well be hated, and the other may well be loved? They know nothing at all, and they will know nothing at all. (Irving 1828:132 *sic*)

I would like to extend Irving's critique in two primary ways. Irving attributes this aphorism to the theology of a European Christian reform movement, which many modern-day American Baptists view as their precursor and from which many of the tenants of modern American evangelicalism emerged (Kidd and Hankins 2015; Leon 1987:56). Irving also questions the ontology of sin that underlies this phrase. Individuals who claim to "love the sinner but hate the sin" invoke a theory of agency, which distinguishes doers from their deeds and affect from action. They are also invoking a theology that pushes the limits of Platonic dualism. Irving's early 18th century critique provides a useful starting point to understand the ethics that drive 21st century evangelical Christian outreach in the commercial sex industry. Namely, the ethical tension that emerges between abolitionist discourse, which mobilizes the Christian anti-trafficking movement by appealing to conservative desires to abolish remunerative sex, and outreach practice, in which volunteers cooperate with a full spectrum of individuals who are involved in financial sexual transactions in order to gain and maintain access to and trust within sites where sex is sold.

In her 2007 essay on the "new abolitionism," Sociologist Elizabeth Bernstein introduces a theoretical framework for understanding the convergence of neoliberal governance, religious

conservativism, and secular feminist advocacy that drives contemporary anti-human trafficking policy and rhetoric. “Carceral gender justice” (Bernstein 2007a, 2010a, 2010b, 2012a, 2012b) has subsequently become the dominant theoretical lens in the growing field of critical anti-human trafficking studies. Late 20th century feminism was characterized by a split between those who advocated for the economic and personal liberty of sex workers through a Marxist paradigm (so-called “sex positive feminists”) and those who sought to abolish pornography, prostitution and other forms of sex work as inherently exploitative to women (*see Part I current manuscript*). Unlike anti-trafficking activists who call for programs to increase the safety of sex workers through the legalization of prostitution (Amnesty 2014, 2016), those in the abolitionist (or modern-day slavery) camp argue that the criminalization of male sex consumers, coupled with rehabilitation programs for women sex sellers, is the most effective means to combat sexual exploitation (Farley 2004, 2013; Shetty 2015). According to Bernstein, by doing so, abolitionist feminists extend neoliberal ideologies that displace responsibility for exploitation away from structural factors onto the individual (Bernstein 2007a, 144).

Despite a lack of evidence about the extent to which human trafficking occurs (Feingold 2010; Kessler 2015; Raphael 2017, 2-3; Weitzer 2010, 2012, 2014; Weitzer and Zhang et. al 2014), those who champion the abolitionist stance have successfully mobilized significant state investment in what has been described as the “urgent” and “immediate crisis” of human trafficking, leading some describe it as a “moral panic” (Gould 2014; Keo *et al* 2014; Weitzer 2007). However, for Bernstein, the success of the abolitionist approach is more productively understood as emerging from its gender ideology. Specifically, a narrative of inherent male predation and female victimization, which resonates with traditional religious ideals and that demands and justifies the policing of male consumers of sex. Drawing on the growing body of

critical literature on anti-human trafficking law and policy, studies of submission among evangelical women (Kintz 1997; Griffith 1997), and her own fieldwork among male sex purchasers (2001) and abolitionist policy activists (2007, 2010a, 2010b), Bernstein's argues that:

Two recent shifts in feminist and conservative Christian sexual politics have made their current alliance against sex trafficking possible: a secular feminist shift from a focus upon bad men inside the home (sexually abusive husbands and fathers) to sexual predators outside of it (traffickers, pimps, and clients), and the feminist-friendly shift of a new generation of evangelical Christians away from sexually improper women (as prior concerns with issues like abortion suggest) to a focus upon sexually improper men. (2012, 244)

In this carceral feminist framework, traditional requirements for Christian women to simultaneously adhere to male leadership while also controlling male base desire are displaced to the state. Thus, Bernstein argues, the state becomes the "enforcement apparatus for feminist goals," (Bernstein 2007a, 143) while feminism becomes implicated in the expansion of a "neoliberal gender strategy that securitizes the family and lends moral primacy to marriage" (2012:250).<sup>10</sup> Building on Sociologist Loïc Wacquant's (2009) analysis of the symbolic efficacy of sex crimes, which provide "an urgent and perpetually refreshed motive for the ... turn to fierce neutralization and vengeful retribution that has characterized U.S. Penal policy since the late 1970s" (Wacquant 2009, 214), Bernstein elaborates the drift towards the carceral state that the feminist carceral framework aids, with significantly broader impact than the issue of human trafficking.<sup>11</sup>

Anti-trafficking rescue practices, in which sex workers are monitored, removed and relocated to rehabilitation programs, are characteristic of the diffuse forms of governance predicted by Foucault (1975). However, for Bernstein, what makes abolitionist feminism decidedly carceral is its emphasis on the criminalization of male sex purchasers vis-a-vis a militant demand for the protection of female victims. Scholars observing abolitionists activists at

policy forums and public demonstrations note their rhetoric claims extend neoliberal discourses of criminality and reinforce fears of male sexual predators (Bernstein 2012a, 244). In a statement raising concerns about the efficacy and unintended harms caused by programs that seek to reform the male clients of sex workers, the Sex Worker Alliance of Vancouver concludes “that there is an underlying moral agenda to the program: female sexuality is something to be protected by the state, while male sexuality is something to be repressed by the individual,” (Marlowe 1996).

Evangelical Christian gender ideology is a logical point of origin for carceral abolitionist discourse. Religiously motivated reformers have driven anti-human trafficking laws since their inception by coupling advocacy for women and girls with punitive measures for consumers and managers of sexual services who are largely male (see Chapter 2 current manuscript). The imprint of Christian moral doctrine is ubiquitous in United States laws pertaining to sexuality (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2004, 2013, 375; Fessenden 2000). And since the First Century CE, Christian rhetoric has naturalized male sexual desire as an unpredictable threat and tasked women with the responsibility for its control through marriage (Cahil 1996, 198; Dowland 2015; Herman 2007(1997), 94; Ludy 2009, 16-17; Seashore 2002; Viefhues-Bailey 2010, 119). However, when examined outside the policy realm, in the context off face-to-face outreach at sites where sex is sold, the limits of the carceral feminist framework come into view.

### **Participant Framework**

As we pushed through the second set of doors of the Devil’s Den and stepped onto sidewalk outside, our previously contained laughter spilled out into the crisp night air. It had taken extraordinary effort to extract ourselves from Kevin. It was now well after eleven o’clock



in the evening. Elated, despite our exhaustion, and eager to return home, our conversation took on the tone of teenage gossip. Naomi stopped abruptly and thrust her arm outward, as if to prevent herself from falling over in laughter and rapidly exclaimed: “Oh-oh-oh-oh my God, you guys. So, like, Kevin wants the spirit in his life, like totally.” We all laughed. But it was clear that she said this sincerely.

With a youthful exuberance that belied her sixty-five years, Naomi exuded an attitude of patient understanding. An excellent listener with a rockin' collection of Louboutin red soles, Naomi mentored Christian women as a small group leader at her large suburban Baptist Church. She was also a natural at outreach, moving with ease in and out of Detroit's most low-resource strip clubs, despite her affluent background. A former kindergarten teacher, Naomi's life had changed dramatically after the death of her wealthy and abusive ex-husband; a “sex addict” she said, whose serial infidelity had risen to criminal proportions, causing her to lose their multi-million dollar suburban home. Fortunately, her marriage, divorce, and his death, had left her sense of humor intact.

In our glee at having reached the car, we failed to see Kevin turning the corner towards us. Sarah sounded the alarm: “He's coming. Shoot! Hurry! Open the door!”

Naomi fumbled with her keys but only managed to hit the fab. While the rest of us sought refuge in her SUV, Kevin placed his hand on door of her car. Stranded, Naomi stood with one foot inside the vehicle. The Den on her right and the American Lodge on her left, Kevin stood facing her, his back to his own pickup, which was parked alongside us. He was not alone. Pointing to his friend “Davey” who had walked you with him, Kevin assured us they meant no harm by following us to the parking lot: “We just wanted to make sure everybody gets out her

safe.” Anne, Sarah, and I smiled through the windows silently, hesitant to respond lest we postpone the conversion indefinitely.

My heart dropped when Kevin turned towards Naomi. He asked: “So you said yer from a Christian [group]?” Naomi nodded, succinctly but silently confirming Kevin’s assessment. Then, Kevin paused and shook his own head. Speaking at an increasingly rapid pace in a string of utterances that were nearly liberated from punctuation, Kevin expressed his confusion:

And then you gave me a fucking mind twister just now. You’re like ‘I’m divorced.’ “Fuck it, I’m like—man, like all these people say that—how in the hell are you divorced if? Fuckin’ if? I dunno. I don’t got a clue, I don’t know how it works, I—I dunno all the—But maybe you guys could fill me in on that later and everybody could come and have a bonfire and hangout and barbecue and chill and go for a boat rid and take the kids finishing on the property? You’re more than welcome.

Despite her previously expressed desire to leave as soon as possible, Naomi jumped at the ministerial opportunity that Kevin presented: “So, being true Christian and divorced—”

Kevin cut her off, shouting enthusiastically: “I don’t even know what Christian is. I can’t tell you what Catholic, Christian, Baptist—I can’t tell you want any of it.” He then stopped abruptly when a third vehicle entered the parking lot (transcript line 12 Appendix D).

Turning his head and shoulders to the right, Kevin watched a large extended cab pick-up truck pull up close behind us and park perpendicular to our car. The volunteers followed his gaze. Looking back through the rear and driver side windows of the SUV (the latter of which was open), I could just make out the scene. The driver, who had rolled down his own window, addressed Kevin. Kevin responded by turning his upper body to the right. The two men then proceeded to nonchalantly discuss their plans for later that evening. Periodically, Kevin would lift his right hand to direct his friend “Davey” who was now moving quickly back and forth

between the pickups, transferring the contents of the third vehicle into the back of Kevin's own truck. All the while Kevin kept his left hand firmly planted on Naomi's car door.

The abrupt shift in the frame of interaction confused the volunteers. It also limited our ability to leave. By maintaining "roughly, divergent orientations of the body sectors above and below the neck and waist, respectively," (Schegloff 1998:536), Kevin signaled his continued participation in the conversation with the volunteers. Yet it was unclear how or when the interaction would be resolved.

According to Emmanuel Schegloff, the capacity to project both interactional "instability and types of potential resolutions of this instability" (Schegloff 1998:536) makes "body torque" a key affordance of interaction. The deployment and resolution of body torque in interaction provides various semiotic input that indicate the "at-least-for-now" reranking among several on-going activities in which the body's deployer is engaged (Schegloff 1998:545). According to Schegloff:

It is when a party to talk in interaction faces an interlocutor while in torque, while lower parts of the body are orientated elsewhere, and no torque resolution is undertaken by bringing the lower body into alignments with the face, it is then that constraints can be found to be imposed on the conduct of the talk—for example, toward its minimization; correspondingly, resolution of torque by bringing the lower parts into alignments with the upper or neutralization of torque by establishing it as a home position, can display readiness to expand the talk then in progress. (Schegloff 1998:544-45)

By turning orienting his body towards newly arrived interlocutors, Kevin signaled that he had left the previous conversation (with the volunteers) and engaged in a new one. Yet by maintaining his lower body aligned to the "home position" and by keeping his hand planted on Naomi's car door, Kevin signaled his intention to return; the shift was a temporary one. He was not ending our conversation but rather putting us on pause while he attended to business outside

our immediate frame of interaction. Kevin's body torque also signaled to the volunteers that they were his priority. Yet, by failing to verbalize the transition, and by excluding them from his conversation with the driver, Kevin denied the volunteers access to the interactional resources that might allow them to leave. Specifically, the ability to initiate a conversational turn through which they could signal their departure. Given their close proximity, it was unclear if the volunteers were mere bystanders to the activity that occurred outside of the vehicle or ratified participants in it. (See frame crosses market in transcript lines 2-3, 12-13, 20-21, 62-63, 65-66, 148-149, and 150-151 in Appendix D).

"Participant framework" represents a key component of the social structure that "orders interaction" (Goffman 1983). Specifically, the participant framework describes the relation of individuals who are co-present for an interaction, including their respective relations to utterances, actions, and to other participants (1981:11). Understanding the configuration participants, and their relative status, helps interlocutors define the boundaries of a frame of interaction. It also provides necessary information to help them interpret the meaning of activities and utterances that occur relative to the frame. By directing joint attention towards a specific stream of activity and away from out-of-frame happenings (1974), the interaction order distinguishes between "main" and "side" involvements (Goffman 1963) and "dominant" and "subordinate" channels of communication (Goffman 1974). All of which signals to participants on the bases of which actions and utterances they should interpret others. According to Goffman, the processes involved in managing the boundaries of the interaction frame are innate (1963:43) and non-reflexive (1957:157). However, they are also inherently intersubjective, both flexible and open to cooperative innovation (1974:237-238) and also subject to social obligations and cultural norms (1981:132). Participants in multi-party communication maintain interactional

coherence across multiple channels within a given participant framework in patterned ways. Practices related to speaker overlap (Schegloff 2001 and Schultz *et al* 1982), conversational schisming (Egbert 1997), and turn-taking (Du Bois 2007; Aoki *et al* 2006; Sacks *et al* 1974) reflect conventions about who speaks when, to whom, and on what grounds. They also imply a relatively linear view of the way that interaction unfolds vis-a-vis the participant structure. When a speaker turns away from one group of ratified participants to engage with a distinct group of others, the frame of interaction is effectively closed. And yet, intersecting concurrent interactions, in which participants attend to multiple conversations simultaneously, is a common feature of natural discourse.

At social gatherings and family dinners, on playgrounds and during class activities, individuals observe, acknowledge, and even cross in and out of distinct but co-occurring interactions. Whether such movement is experienced as intrusive (Goffman 1981) or welcomed as a collaborative transformation (Egbert 1997), proximal interactivity affords speakers information about their immediate environments (Goffman 1974) and offers them possibilities for how to act in ethical ways. The act of attending to certain parallel interactions and participants and not others, indexes skill (Lemon 2013), strategy (Goffman 1974) and ethical stance (Goffman 1981 and 1979; Goodwin 2002). According to Erving Goffman, when we overhear conversation to which we are not party, the ethics of interaction oblige us both to “us to warn those who are, that they are, unknowingly accessible” and also to “enact a show of disinterest and by disattending and withdrawing ecologically to minimize our actual access to the talk,” (Goffman 1981:132). For Goffman, paralinguistic cues like gesture are central to the practice of the situation ethic of disattention: “in managing the accessibility of an encounter both its participants and its bystanders will heavily on sight, not sound,” (*ibid*).

Obligated by a situational ethic not to interrupt Kevin, an evangelical mandate to keep the channel open for continued religious talk, as well as stymied by the interactional instability signaled by Kevin's "torqued" bodily position, the volunteers had little choice but to wait. Moreover, given the activity that was occurring in the parking lot outside the vehicle, it was also unclear if it would be wise of them to do otherwise. As the volunteers looked on, Kevin's friend Davey transferred three large red coolers and dozens of large Ziploc bags into the back of Kevin's truck. (Based on interviews from federal law enforcement, I later learned that the bags were filled with marijuana and that coolers most likely contained heroine.) All of which occurred in full view of Naomi and Sarah, the volunteer who sat in Naomi's rear driver's side, both of whom enjoyed an unobstructed view of the activity that was occurring fewer than ten feet away.

Naomi torqued her body, rotating her upper body towards the volunteers inside of the vehicle, and whispered urgently, "Let's leave right now!" (transcript line 16 Appendix D). And yet, we stayed.

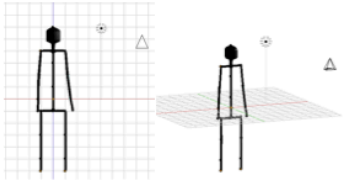
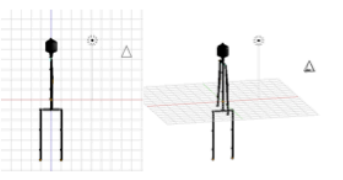
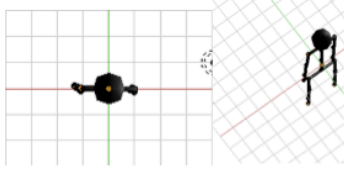
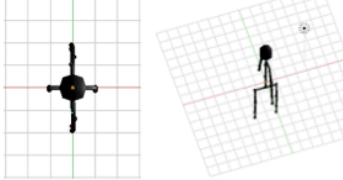
### **Transcribing Frame Crossing Activity**

In his initial formulation of a framework for analyzing body torque, Schegloff provides photographic images that have been excerpted from videos of interaction. He then cross references these images with transcripts of speech. While videos provide the ideal data for gesture analysis, video and photographic data collection is not available or appropriate to all fieldwork situations. Despite this, it can be easily noted by observers. Moreover, concerns about privacy and editorial choices may make the inclusion of photographs undesirable. In the transcript that I reference in this chapter, I adopt a method for noting the deployment and resolution of body torque within transcripts themselves. To do so, I adapt the Eshkol Wachman

Movement Notation (EWMN), by providing coordinate notations that designate bodily alignment.

In the EWMN system, body torque in a standing or seated individual indicates a shift on the horizontal plane of motion. In the case of a Kevin, who torques to his body to right by rotating his gaze, torso, and shoulders to the, the degree of rotation along the vertical axis could be represented roughly as follows: Upper Torso, Shoulders and Facial Gaze at position 2/2 while Hips and Lower Body remain at the position 0/2. This transition is most readily observed by looking from above.

**Figure 15. Body Torque involving rightward rotation on the horizontal plane.**

	Neutral forward-facing position: Upper Body at 0/2 and Lower Body at 0/2 (From the perspective of the body-deploying subject.)	Rightward body torque position: Upper Body at 2/2 and Lower Body at 0/2. (From the perspective of the body-deploying subject.)
Front View Directly Forward & Slightly Offset		
(Birdseye) Top View Directly Above & Slightly Offset		

The transcript from this interaction (Appendix D) presents three distinct participant frameworks that emerged in the segment of activity that occurred in the Devil's Den parking lot. The sequence of talk is laid out in a table, which reads left to right. The columns designate the speakers. The bolded boundaries between the column's indicate the axis of interaction, providing information about speaker orientation and the direction of address. Shifts in bodily position, specifically body torque, are indicated by the EWMN coordinates listed in brackets. The goal is

to express the speakers' bodily movements and positions relative to one another, which provide semiotic structure without which the constitution of action through the talk would be impossible (Goodwin 2000). Specifically, physical gesture of body torque, which, I argue, is the observable signal of "frame crossing activity" in this interaction.

Standing in the cold, Naomi took advantage of an extended pause in Kevin's conversation. After an approximately five-second-long break in the talk, she finally spoke up. But when she did so, she did not tell Kevin goodbye. Despite the sense of urgency, she conveyed to the volunteers who sat within the vehicle, when Naomi again addressed Kevin, she did not do so to ask him to step away so that she could back out her car "right now." Instead, she initiated talk by re-introducing the evangelizing frame of interaction.

The following exchange is excerpted from a string of utterances, which appear in transcript lines 20 to 33 (Appendix D).

"So, Kevin?" asked Naomi.

"Yeah," he responded half-heartedly, still gazing towards the third truck.

"OK, in a nutshell, to become a Christian is super, super easy."

Kevin snapped his upper body to the left to face her, resolving the torque. Suddenly highly animated, he said: "I don't even know what a Christian is!" By this mere ninety-degree physical conversion, Kevin took up his role as Naomi had hailed him, once again assuming the interactional role of the spiritual seeker. Laughing heartily, he continued: "But people there's God, there's Jesus, there's Christ ... There's way too many people to dial in one night to even fuckin' think about. So, what I am saying to you is 'hey, just come over and hang out a bonfire' and maybe you can explain it to me."



“We’d love that,” Naomi replied.

“You’re more than welcome ... fish, bring the kids, family, husbands. I don’t care. You guys are—you guys are gonna be more than safe, even [more than] being here ... Cause that’s insane.”

Kevin and Naomi’s return to the evangelizing conversation, which was achieved through the resolution of their body torque, signaled a shift in their interactional goals. Kevin’s talk, which had, in the immediately previous lines been focused on directing activity outside of the vehicle, was now, once again focused on obtaining information from the volunteers about what it “means to be Christian.” For Naomi, this move entailed a shift from the goal of “leaving” to one related to evangelizing Kevin. The process calls to mind the analytical framework of French Social Philosopher Louis Althusser.

According to Althusser, the way that ideology mediates between social structures and individuals has to do with the process of interpellation; individuals do not experience ideology outside of themselves, rather they are complicit in their own subjugation when they respond in the moment of being “hailed” as social subjects that stand in particular relation to ideological systems. To illustrate this process, Althusser considers the individual who turns when the police officer who shouts out in public: “Hey, you there!” Upon hearing this call, an individual turns, and “by this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject” (Althusser 1972, 174). This process is immediate, circulatory, and simultaneous; hailing establishes the dominance of social structures by establishing individuals as subjects to those structures. However, because the capacity to hail a particular subject into being precedes the process of interpellation in any one individual, some scholars have interpreted Althusser’s

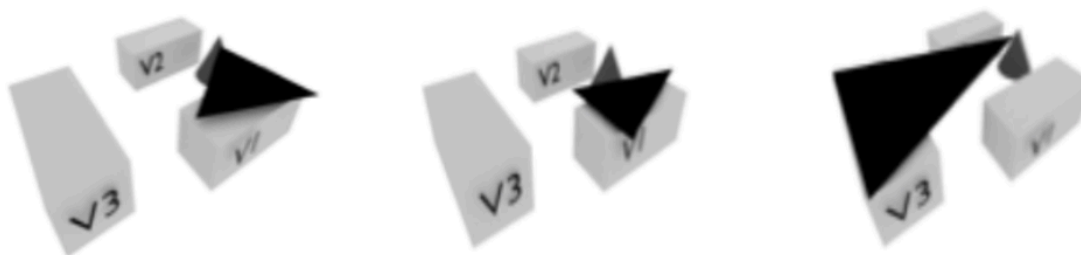
framework as one that suggests that individuals are-always-already-subjects prior to interpellation and criticized his model for failing to sufficiently elaborate the specific mechanisms by which ideology is internalized). For example, individuals are subjects of the state as citizens from birth (Althusser 2000[1974], 132). Bearing in mind that Althusser sought specifically to expand Marx's understanding of Ideology as an all-encompassing and externally imposed false consciousness (ibid, 131), I approach Althusser's framework with an understanding of indexical force and the significant flexibility that participant framework affords to ask: how might the hailing process account for changes in subject position?

Like the individual who is a citizen (or not) prior to being hailed by law enforcement's call, when Kevin responds to Naomi's utterance about "being a Christian," he does so with a prior relationship to religious institutions (afforded by his prior experience with his grandparents' church) and with an existing understanding of Christian ideology (the business of strip clubs and marijuana, like divorce, are sinful). He also does so within a specific interactional setting. Specifically, he does so in the context of multiple concurrent intersecting interactions each of which have different goals.

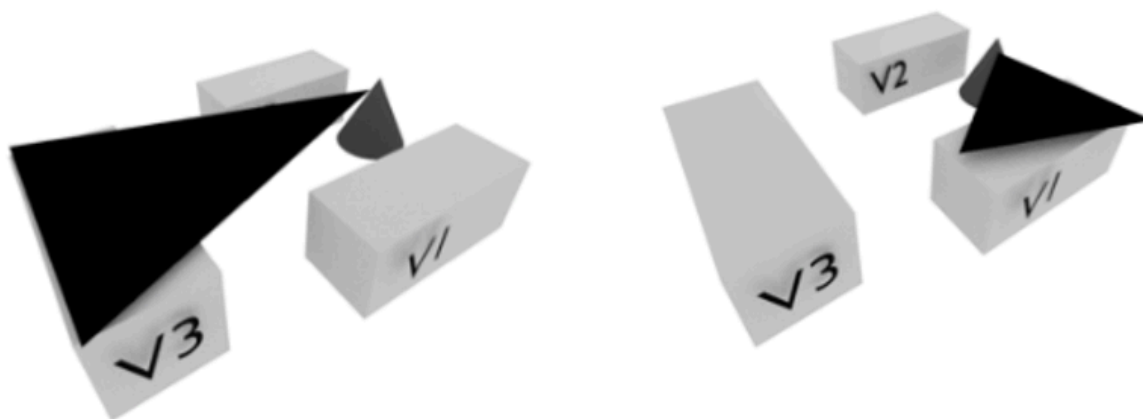
In the talk that occurs prior to Naomi's hail, Kevin is directing business that involves actions that would generally be understood as explicitly contrary to the publicly stated goals of the evangelical anti-sex trafficking movement, *i.e.* profiting from strip clubs and illegal drug trafficking. It is in the act of turning away from this frame and towards the volunteers (the interaction that his body torque signals is the dominant one) that Kevin acknowledges that it is he, as a willing-to-be-evangelized subject of religious ideology, is the subject who was now speaking. Kevin achieves this by crossing frames of interaction, which shifts of the participant

framework of each stance triangle (transcript lines 2-3, 12-13, 20-21, 62-63, 65-66, 148-149, and 150-151 in Appendix D).

**Figure 16. Home Positions for Interactions in the Devil's Den Parking Lot**



**Figure 17. Kevin Shifts Position from Interaction #2 to #3**



By resolving his body torque, Kevin was once again a ratified participant in the conversation with the volunteers to which his associates outside the vehicle were made bystanders. In semiotic terms, this shift is iconic of a shift in Kevin's subject position. By inviting the volunteers to his home, which he describes as a "safe" place in contrast to the Devil's Den, Kevin both distanced himself from the club and aligned himself and the volunteers: "good" and "beautiful" Christian women. Likewise, by postponing her departure to speak with Kevin, positively responding to his invitation to come to his home (which, I later learned, she

had no interest in doing), and by turning away from the relatively spiritually un-generous stance articulated in the interaction that occurred within Vehicle #1, Naomi was responding to the institutional and ideological mandates to evangelize.

Similar to Kevin, Naomi's deployment and resolution of body torque signaled shifts in her own subject position. Despite the lighthearted way that she addressed Kevin in the evangelizing frame, when she turned to address the volunteers in the car, she urgently asserted her desire to leave. Torqueing her body away from Kevin and towards the volunteers in the vehicle, Naomi expresses her urgent desire to leave on multiple occasions (transcript lines 2, 18-19, and 63-65 Appendix D). And yet, when she subsequently turns back toward Kevin, she appears to enthusiastically welcome his engagement (lines 3 and 71), even taking the lead to *re-initiate* the interaction at times (*for example, see* line 21). And when Kevin pressed the volunteers to extend the interaction, either through a physical visit to his home or a phone call (lines 27-32, 53-56, 69-71) Naomi eventually capitulates (lines 71-72). Despite her agreement to call him, I later learned that neither she, nor the other volunteers, had any intention of doing so.

On the drive home I asked Naomi if I could attend the Bible Study when they called Kevin, she told me: "No way we are doing that. He scared me. But he definitely wants Jesus in his life. What a sweet guy."

Naomi's sympathetically disposed action towards Kevin contradicts the punitive gender ideology implied by the carceral feminist framework. The dissonance between being "scared" by a "sweet" guy, reveals how Christian evangelicalism contravenes abolitionist discourse. It also suggests a particular lens for analyzing the volunteers' ethical stance. Their ethical dissonance towards Kevin points not to insincerity but rather to an ethic of dis-attenuation, which is a

hallmark of direct outreach by anti-trafficking Christian ministries at sexual oriented businesses (see Chapters 6 and 7, *current manuscript*). In the interaction in the Devil's Den parking lot, the volunteers disattended to Kevin's actions that occurred in the other frames of interaction. Instead, they focused on his signals of readiness for spiritual conversion.

Recalling his early Christian education, Kevin described his grandparents' "goddam church" as the "boringest thing" (transcript lines 88 and 90). He then launched into an animated tongue-in-cheek rant about his childhood view of various contradictions in Christian theology. Using reflexive self-deprecating humor, Kevin scoffed at the sanctity of eucharistic ritual, describing the communion wafer "stale chip" (line 90). He described the irony of tithing, laughing at his own punchline: "The pastor ha[d] his basket givin' money away and I'm not getting any money from any of this stuff!" (line 90). He pointed out the absurdity of young earth creationist theology: "There ain't a goddam Bible I picked up yet beyond anymore the even talks about being a dinosaur. Now what? Now what? And I-I-I physically went there [to the natural history museum] and seen this dinosaur shit!" However, through it all, Kevin repeatedly appealed to the volunteers to forgive him for his spiritual misgivings: "It's just nothing, there, this shift in my brain ... I dunno. I'm fucked up," (line 99).

The volunteers may have easily interpreted Kevin's animated sarcasm as heretical or, at least, alienating. Instead, they focused on his self-deprecating statements, which they interpreted as disfluencies that signaled his spiritual distress. They encouraged his self-reflection: "Aww ... No, you're not," (line 99). In one of the rare moments I heard her quote scripture during outreach, Naomi assured him: "You are seriously a precious child of God. We all are. He fearfully and wonderfully you," (line 101). That Naomi interprets Kevin's disfluencies as moral

readiness and not, for example, drunkenness, is significant to evangelical theories of conversion and interiority.

Unlike Samuel Crowther, the colonial era Bishop of Niger who argues that Charles Taylor's disfluencies marked his lack of moral capacity (Irvine 2009), Kevin's disfluencies — his multiple false starts, distractibility, shifts between interactional clusters, failure to uptake the non lexico-semantic cues that the volunteers want to leave, epistemic stance of ignorance — are interpreted by Naomi as evidence of inner turmoil, self-alienation, a psychic break that precedes the moment of ensubjectivization and as evidence of Kevin's readiness for conversion. What Kevin refers to as a "twisted mind." He implored volunteers to: "Teach me something outside of southwest Detroit. I need to get out of here. That's what I need to do ... go back to the house ... pull up a chair, look at the water," (line 49).

The activity in the Devil's Den parking lot continued according to this pattern for approximately forty-five minutes. Kevin and Naomi pivoted between their respective interactional clusters. However, by maintaining their "home positions" as being aligned with one another, both Naomi and Kevin signaled that their priority was to speak with one another in the evangelizing frame.

In this setting, the process of interpellation occurred by virtue of the dissonance between the various subject positions that Naomi and Kevin simultaneously occupied. All of which was made possible by both the flexibility afforded by the interaction order and its inherent collaboratively. As they deployed and resolved body torque in order to cross in and out of multiple frames of interaction, Kevin and Naomi physically were working out what it meant to "be a Christian." The tension embodied in their frame crossing also related to intimacy. As they cooperated to repair potential interactional ruptures, both Kevin and Naomi acted in ways that

simultaneously collapsed and expanded the distance between them. For their part, the volunteers were also working out the ideology that outreach entailed. Desiring to leave and disturbed by Kevin's activities in the parking lot, the volunteers were nonetheless obliged by situational ethics and evangelical ideology to not only stay, but also to take up and extend Kevin's expressions of spiritual confusion, personal invitations, and discursive disfluencies as signals of his readiness to accept Jesus "into his life," (line 1). It is through analytical attention to the processes of body torque and frame crossing in abolitionist outreach interaction such as this that Christian evangelicalism can be observed to contravene Christian abolitionism.

### **The Raid**

By insisting that he needed "good people in his life right now," Kevin made the volunteers an offer that was difficult for them to refuse. However, their caution was warranted. Shortly after our visit to the Den, a federal anti-human trafficking raid uncovered a sex trafficking ring operating from the American Lodge Motel next door. The motel was shuttered immediately, and the Devil's Den closed later that year. The raid confirmed my suspicions that the primary revenue-generating activity at the Den was not dancing but rather prostitution. It also surprised me by bringing to light information that suggest the venue had long been tied to organize crime.

Compared with other clubs in the city, the Den had few customers and dancers there spent relatively little time on stage. During my Thursday night visits with the ministry, it was not uncommon for the stage to sit empty for twenty minutes at a time while the dancers circulated or "floated" among patrons on the floor. My experience was confirmed by online reviews written by self-described "regulars" who explained that although most of the Den's dancers were less

conventionally attractive than those who danced at the higher-end clubs in the city, “dancers usually outnumber[ed] customers” and were generally “high mileage:” encouraging customers to engage in illicit sexual contact. State liquor licensing records confirmed this. Not only had the Devil’s Den frequently been cited for violations involving illegal contact between customers and dancers, many employees had been convicted of prostitution on the premises.

In the past, the Den had been known for its high number of “VIP rooms;” private rooms where patrons pay dancers to perform “lap dances” or solicit more intimate encounters involving direct physical contact, also known as “extras.”<sup>12</sup> A dancer told me that at one point, the Den had dedicated more than a third of its floor space to such rooms. Prostitution is illegal in Michigan and the Detroit City council outlawed VIP rooms at Sexually Oriented Businesses in 2010. However, few clubs complied. According to one long-time bartender, the Den’s management waited for years after the ban to remove the VIP rooms. Shortly thereafter, many dancers protested, complaining that they now had to take patrons “off property” in order to “make tips.” Given its close proximity, the American Lodge was a convenient location. While media reports of the raid did not explicitly link the two closures, the trafficking operation did involve the Devil’s Den staff. Law enforcement and social workers identified the Den’s dancers as victims of the human trafficking operation. A bouncer had provided key information to the investigation. He was later shot and killed. The financial structure of the trafficking operation at the American Lodge also involved a large volume of drugs, similar to the ones which we watched being unloaded into Kevin’s vehicle in the parking lot on the night of outreach.

After the raid, I struggled to reconcile my experiences at the Devil’s Den with the events that I now know were occurring at the American Lodge motel next door. Similar to other relatively low resource clubs in the city, ministry volunteers received a warm welcome at the



Den. Club management waived volunteers' parking and cover fees and dancers enthusiastically expressed their gratitude for the small gifts they distributed while there. Many shared deeply personal stories about their lives and seemed receptive to volunteers' advice about how to access church and community aid resources. A few even inquired how they might join the ministry as volunteers themselves.

In Internet forums where strip club customers write about their experiences, reviewers described the Devil's Den as a "blue collar" venue with "cheap drinks" and "a laid-back atmosphere" with dancers of "all shapes and sizes" where "everyone is welcome." Others were put off by what they described as the club's "dangerous atmosphere" and "unhygienic spaces and practices." In early 2016, upon learning that I regularly visited the Den as part of a Christian outreach ministry, one retired auto worker cautioned me that the Den was a "notorious knife and gun club." During his time working in the factory, he said, even the "big guys who worked the [steel line] were afraid to go there." This surprised me given the special privileges that I had heard the club extended to autoworkers. Historically, the Devil's Den waived cover charges and entrances fees were waived for customers holding employee identification cards from the "Big Three." Later, I learned that the Den's ties to organized crime were common knowledge in the law enforcement community. Specifically, the club was known as a favorite hangout for the Highwaymen Motorcycle Club, a so-called "one percenter" criminal motorcycle gang based in Southwest Detroit.<sup>13</sup>

While I did not learn any information that connected Kevin to the events that occurred at the American Lodge, his financial stake in the Den did suggest a possible association with criminal activity. Kevin first introduced himself as an "investor" in the Devil's Den. I initially understood this to be a self-deprecating commentary on the amount of money that he spent there

as customer tipping dancers. He later corrected me telling me that he was a “part owner” of the business.

The Devil’s Den was the acting business name of a commercial corporation that filed Articles of Incorporation with the State of Michigan in 1998 and was authorized to issue sixty-thousand shares of common stock. Incorporation allows for the splitting of corporate profits among various investors who purchase shares, either privately or publicly (as in the stock market). Incorporation is a common business practice that allows business owners to raise capital from investors by providing them with a stake in future profits. It also shields them by limiting liability and dispersing the risk of potential business losses. In theory, incorporating also results in a comprehensive record of all the entities that have a financial stake in a business. However, the business records for the corporation that operated and (from 2002) owned the Den, were spotty. Handwritten filings contained obvious misspellings and some aliases that corresponded with public criminal records.

By cross-referencing state and municipal licensing and property records, I was able to reconstruct the Devil’s Den’s ownership history. From 1995 to 2017, the physical property where the Den was located had been sold seven times in a series of transactions that involved nineteen distinct entities. Although complex ownership history is not unusual in cases of incorporation and while thirty-year-old filings may reasonably be expected to be incomplete, the pattern of ownership suggested that the club had been used as a pass-through entity which enabled investors to exchange funds and evade taxation. Multiple individuals and businesses had listed the club’s location as their primary address. In one two-month period in the 1990s, the property was sold five times, with some owners selling at a loss the day after they purchased it, according to the signed dates on the sales contracts. A search of liquor licenses at the club’s

address suggested further questionable practices. According to state records, starting in 2014, reported liquor sales at the Devil's Den reduced dramatically. From January 2016 to December 2016, the club reported a mere \$31.23 in alcohol sales. In contrast 2016 liquor sales at a strip club of similar size and ambience elsewhere in the city were reported as \$56,235.50. While the largest club in the city reported more than half-a-million during that period. All of which confirmed the club's reputation within the community.

### **Conclusion**

An "abolitionist approach" to anti-human trafficking policy argues that in order to reduce human trafficking is necessary to eradicate all forms of prostitution. Abolitionist rhetoric condemns remunerative sexuality as inherently exploitative by exonerating those who sell sexual services as "victims." Carceral policies that criminalize only the purchase of sexual services, or that couple the criminalization of prostitution with victim rehabilitation programs, shift the blame for sexual exploitation primarily to sex consumers (Bernstein 2007a, 2010a, 2010b, 2012a, and 2012b). In contrast, so-called "sex positive feminists" distinguish sex trafficking from legitimate sexual labor. Policies that seek to reduce human trafficking by legalizing prostitution and enacting human rights protection for sex workers, place the blame for sexual exploitation on a minority criminal element, which flourishes in black market conditions. The Christian anti-sex trafficking outreach programs I observed asserted a third frame. Like other abolitionists, Christian anti-sex trafficking intervention programs condemn prostitution, sexually oriented businesses, and other forms of transactional sex. However, outreach programs that emphasized spiritual reconciliation as the primary mechanism to eliminate human trafficking conceptualized sexual trafficking as a "sin." When viewed through the lens of evangelical

theology, all forms of remunerative sexuality (including sex trafficking) produced morally toxic effects for all parties involved including those who profited from the sexual of sexual services, those who purchased them, and those who provided them (consenting or not).

As noted in Chapter 7, during outreach, volunteers with anti-trafficking outreach ministries practice strategic attenuation: ignoring some elements in the commercial sex environment while calling attention to others. Furthermore, as noted in Chapters Four and Five, Christian anti-trafficking outreach ministries that publicly assert abolitionist rescue rhetoric, do not, during outreach, remove women from exploitative situations. Neither do they employ punitive rhetoric to criticize the male consumers of purveyors of sexual services that they meet. Indeed, the ability to capture the attention of such men, and compassionately evangelize to them, was lauded as a ministerial success. This suggests the existence of a contravening discourse in Christian abolitionism that has remained largely unanalyzed in the growing field of critical anti-trafficking studies. Specifically, a theology of “grace” coupled with a mode of proselytizing that stresses reconciliation: religious conversion.

Driven by moral system in which all individuals are potentially virtuous regardless of their past “sin,” and seeking to distance themselves from other church groups who visited commercially oriented business or street based solicitation sites primarily for the purpose of protesting them,<sup>14</sup> volunteers from the anti-trafficking outreach ministries that I observed insisted that the most effective way to end human trafficking was to spiritually reconcile individuals in the commercial sex industry to the Christian faith. The proliferation of anti-trafficking outreach ministries like these suggests the need for a new approach to understanding Christian anti-sex trafficking movement. Specifically, a conceptual framework that does not take evangelicalism merely as a system of moral values, but rather approaches it as an ethical project, which entails

constant semiotic practices of reflexive self-evaluation through which evangelicals collectively and explicitly attempt to transform themselves and others.

### **Personal Reflection**

During the time that I wrote this chapter, personal events forced me to reconcile my relationship with sexual predators in my life. Shortly after I began drafting this text, I learned that my beloved mentor and high school teacher had hanged himself following the public disclosure of this sexual relationship with a minor student. As I write, a family member, whom I'd previously experienced primarily as a kind, albeit extremely conservative Catholic seminarian, is currently serving a federal prison sentence for trafficking in child pornography. In addition, the story of Larry Nasser, the sexually predatory sports doctor at Michigan State University, continues to dominate the local news. All of which has afforded me little emotional and intellectual respite from the problems I address through this writing.

What disturbs me most about the events represented in this chapter is the ease with which I cooperated in the effort to construct Kevin as a "good man," despite any meaningful evidence to support this assertion. When Kevin described his excess income, the large marina where he lived and his willingness to host a religious gathering there, I eagerly participated in his vision of himself as a generous benefactor. I allowed myself to imagine the possible ways that his resources and his working class ethics could be deployed for the public good: a recreational center for low-income youth or a safe house for victims of domestic violence. As I reflected on these memories, in light of the other personal events in my life, I am disturbed by what is suggests about my apparent inability to identify predators.

Some friends and colleagues who have heard me describe the events that occurred at the Devil's Den understand the problem in simpler way; Kevin and the volunteers were lying or, at least, misrepresenting themselves. Yet the micro practices of interaction documented in the transcript reveal a much more complicated story. Specifically, that the human capacity to simultaneously sustain multiple, seemingly contradictory, ethical stances is an affordance of the interaction order that results from its inherent intersubjectivity and flexibility. By shifting the focus away from countless moral ambiguities—now rendered unresolvable by the exposure of a horrific chain of crimes—my analysis focuses on the creativity in interaction.

In writing about trickster hero figures in mythology, Basso (1988) considers how selfhood is realized in and through language by shifting “the focus from a trickster’s moral ambiguities and pervasive liminality to address more concretely how a trickster’s curiously decentered self can constitute a kind of personality,” (1996[1988]: 54). According to the volunteers, the various interactional and lexo-semantic disfluencies that characterizes Kevin’s talk in the parking lot signify the sincerity of his spiritual search. Likewise, his spiritual conversion to a Christian moral system would be signified by the resolution of his “disorderly nature.” This is what Naomi is attempting to achieve. When she comments on Kevin’s personal history and his theological musings, Naomi is offering him a coherent narrative structure. At the same time, however, Naomi suggests that Kevin’s alignment with that structure is not necessary for him to be a “good man,” which he already is. Indeed, like the figure of the hero trickster, Kevin’s moments of magnanimity and protection are predicated on his seemingly capricious ethical stance and his ability to improvise in the interactional movement.

As an anthropologist, what interests me about the segment of activity that is transcribed in Appendix D is the apparent dissonance between the ethical stances that the participants

cultivate in these three concurrent parallel frames of interaction. While the dominant frame is marked by volunteers' lighthearted attempts to evangelize Kevin and assert his moral virtue—a set of goals with which he eagerly cooperates through jovial self-deprecation and by taking up and extending themes of hospitality, family, and Catholic theology—the subordinate frames appear to contradict these participant stances. When he turns away from the volunteers to address his associates, Kevin engages in what appears to be the final steps of closing a large illegal drug transaction. A transaction which he carries out in full view of the volunteers. Aware that they are now speaking with a man who is not only has an ownership stake in a strip club but who is likely also a drug dealer, volunteers speak among themselves about their desire to leave. Yet, when Kevin turns back to re-engage the dominant frame, the volunteers respond heartily, persistently taking and up and re-asserting's Kevin's potential for moral virtue, thus extending the interaction indefinitely.

Conventions of evangelization require believers to take up and affirm possible signs of belief, faith, and spiritual longing that may be displayed by potential converts. By analyzing how participants sustain cooperation in the dominant frame of interaction, despite constant shifts in and out of subordinate frames (shifts which are made salient through body torque and diagrams of the participant framework), this chapter tracks the diffusion of responsibility in interaction. By tracking participants' shifting ethics stances across these frame shifts, this chapter explores ethical virtue as an interactionally emergent feature of the self.

## Notes to Chapter 8

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<sup>1</sup> A woman on the stage waived me over, pausing mid-dance to show me black rubber bracelet emblazoned with the Eve's Angels' logo. "Did you want a cookie?" I asked. "Oh no sweetie, I'm on a sugar cleanse." She paused, pointing to her bracelet: "I just wanted to show you that I'm wearing it." I smile approvingly but was uncomfortably aware that I was now obstructing the stage view. Fearing a potential heckling scene, I turned to leave but she caught my shoulder and pulled me in for a partial embrace: "I'm just so happy to see you! I wanted to tell you that I'm going to take that class at the community college." Though I'd never met her before, I felt genuine pride. "Congratulations!" I added, before backing quickly away.

<sup>2</sup> From 2015 to 2017, there were more than forty clubs in the city of Detroit based online listings. However, ethnographic research revealed that approximately twenty-five operated at any given time.

<sup>3</sup> For discussion and examples of strip club protest groups see: Lee 2014; JCGirlsrock 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Lamenting the "isolating" and "inauthentic" features of the 20th century "Church," younger evangelicals increasingly seek out like-minded communities of believers that integrate worship and local community activism in diverse urban settings (Bielo 2011; Flory 2016). Such demographic changes reflect broader shifts in evangelical theology and proselytizing practice. Those who volunteer with direct outreach ministries like Eve's Angels seek to enact their faith through repeated direct interpersonal encounters with individuals and in locations that have traditionally be regarded as physically or spiritually dangerous. These shifts also introduce new tensions. While the emergence of the survivor-led ministry model ameliorates concerns about potential power imbalances between outreach volunteers and their targets of their efforts, such as those documented in other evangelical outreach programs (c.f. Elisha 2011), it also triggers conservative concerns about female sexual purity. Unlike their predecessors, younger evangelicals are more likely to distance themselves from the features that defined American evangelicalism in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Namely, homogenous suburban mega churches and a narrow political interest focused on a subset of pet issues (c.f. Bielo 2011; Flory 2016). Donnewald capitalizes on and extends such critiques. An outspoken critic of Christian hypocrisy and (mostly male) church leaders who deny their own sexual practices that contribute to sexual exploitation, Donnewald's quick wit, brutal honesty and unapologetic ability to communicate respect for the beliefs of other faiths and cultures, make her an ideal figurehead for would be evangelical social justice warriors. Anny Donnewald describes herself as a "former stripper and escort." Similar to other survivor leaders such as Theresa Flores, Donnewald shares her personal story of violent sexual abuse and recovery in her book, in media interviews, and in public lectures. She also leverages this narrative to collaborate with state and municipal government leaders to promote anti-trafficking programs and legislation. However, unlike some other survivor leaders who emphasize aspects of their stories that comply with public expectations that trafficking victims are young and otherwise sexually naive (for example, see my discussion of Theresa Flores and the Myth of the Perfect Victim in chapter one), Donnewald's image is that of a street-wise and pragmatic crusader. And she distances herself from Christian anti-trafficking leaders that align with conservative political ideologies (see chapter three). Thus, it may strike some as ironic that, in contrast to leaders like Flores, Donnewald is persistently vocal about the spiritual thrust of her mission. For example, in 2017, she eschewed access to public funding that she believed would have compromised the religious nature of Eve's Angels' work. Originally incorporated as a "Christian charity," Eve's Angels was listed as a "church" on its most recent IRS 990 filing [YEAR]. Donnewald describes the Christian anti-trafficking movement as a "revolution," and, on occasion, describes herself as a "prophet" (c.f. O'Riley 2017; Donnewald personal communication).

<sup>5</sup> An "abolitionist approach" to anti-human trafficking policy argues that in order to reduce human trafficking is necessary to eradicate all forms of prostitution. Abolitionist rhetoric condemns remunerative sexuality as inherently exploitative by exonerating those who sell sexual services as "victims." Carceral policies that criminalize only the purchase of sexual services, or that couple the criminalization of prostitution with victim rehabilitation programs, shift the blame for sexual exploitation primarily to sex consumers (Bernstein 2007a, 2010a, 2010b, 2012a, and 2012b). In contrast, so-called "sex positive feminists" distinguish sex trafficking from legitimate sexual labor. Policies that seek to reduce human trafficking by legalizing prostitution and enacting human rights protection for sex workers, place the blame for sexual exploitation on a minority criminal element, which flourishes in black market conditions. The Christian anti-sex trafficking outreach programs I observed asserted a third frame."

<sup>6</sup> See: Jcgirlsrock 2010; Moran 2014 etc. for examples of strip club protests. Here (or elsewhere) I need to elaborate this based on an example of Eve's Angel's Ministry going down to help resolve a conflict between a protesting church and a strip club. But I think this would be better done in Chapter Four.

<sup>7</sup> Discursive action that potentially changes to the outwardly or inwardly facing aspects of the self are described as "face-threatening acts" (FTAs) Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]).

<sup>8</sup> I recognize that the more correct translation would be "With love for mankind and hatred of sins" cited as Augustine's letter 211 (c. 424) or possibly "with due love for the persons and hatred of the sin," (ibid, different translations). I want to double check



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with a classicist or biblical scholar to double check which translation(s) would be acceptable and what their scholarly implications would be. Incidentally, google translator translates the phrase as follows: “with love of people and hatred for sin.”

<sup>9</sup> (Jakobsen, & Pellegrini, 2004)

<sup>10</sup> Carceral justice describes a system of governance that seeks to maintain social order through pervasive public surveillance and the threat of punishment through the penal system, both of which become institutionalized through scientific discourses of criminality (Foucault 1975). In the carceral state, individuals who violate laws are construed as potential life-long threats to public health and safety. In contemporary jurisprudence, a carceral approach may be understood in comparison to models that advocate alternatives to penal measures, such as those employed in community-based reconciliation and restorative justice programs (c.f. Cook *et al* 2006; Van Ness and Strong 2014). In social theory, the approach is understood to have emerged with the rise of the modern nation state in 19th century Europe; nationalist governance models that utilized newly developed scientific surveillance technologies and institutional systems through which states could monitor their citizens, curtail their movement and isolate criminals through prisons, what French social historian Michel Foucault refers to as the “carceral archipelago” (Foucault 1975). In the carceral state, encroachment on public privacy and mobility is politically justified on the grounds that the state must identify criminal agents and remove them from the public sphere for the benefit of the citizenry, especially to crime victims who are cast as emblematic of the state’s role as defender and liberator (Simon 2007).

<sup>11</sup> According to Bernstein: “Viewed as such, it becomes clear that as neoliberal economic policies extend their reach around the globe, they will serve to diffuse a new criminal justice-focused social agenda (as Wacquant has aptly demonstrated) in tandem with a new political paradigm of gender and sexuality that is premised upon the (feminist) family value of amative, sexually egalitarian couples. This new paradigm has been disseminated through such disparate means as stepped up laws and controls against sex offenders (including proposals for a new pan-European sex offender registry), the insertion of men into private-sphere caring labor via official World Bank development policy, and burgeoning international campaigns against the ‘traffic in women.’ Indeed, one of the reasons that anti-trafficking campaigns have become such a galvanizing issue for feminists, evangelicals, and other activists is because the interlinked sexual, carceral, and economic commitments that they comprise can be harnessed to the now hegemonic internationalist discourse of “women’s human rights.” (2012:250-251)

<sup>12</sup> “Extras” commonly include masturbation, oral sex, and other forms of erotic touch up to and including intercourse. All of which are prohibited under anti-prostitution laws. Further, they are frowned upon by dancers and club management in most cities and states. However, Detroit, which according to one sex worker blogger boasts the “best lap dances in the country, for only \$20 a song” (Josephine 2013), is a notable exception to this norm. According to those writing on the strip club-related forums TUSCL.net, Detroit is a well-known destination for customers interested in purchasing “extras,” (c.f. Jamesday 2014; KPrince 2009). Lest such reports reflect mere braggadocity, Detroit’s reputation as an “extra’s” town was also confirmed by dancers themselves, including prominent sex work bloggers (c.f. M 2013). All of which likely stems from a general dearth in legal oversight and enforcement in the city more broadly. (For a discussion of sex work and sexual oriented businesses in Detroit, see Chapter Two.)

<sup>13</sup> Since the 1970’s and as recently as 2017, Highwaymen MC leaders have been repeatedly been indicted for violent and drug trafficking crimes (see Burnstein 2014, 2017a and 2017b; USDOJ 2009; Egan 2007 and 2017; Wilkinson 2008). Despite its relatively small size, the Highwaymen MC has been invoked in international drug trafficking (Burnstein 2017a) and is also thought to have been responsible for driving Hell’s Angels (and other rivals) out of the city of Detroit (Burnstein 2014; Wilkinson 2008).

<sup>14</sup> See: Jcgirlsrock 2010; Moran 2014 etc. for examples of strip club protests. Here (or elsewhere) I need to elaborate this based on an example of Eve’s Angel’s Ministry going down to help resolve a conflict between a protesting church and a strip club. But I think this would be better done in Chapter Four.

## **APPENDICIES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Organizations Studied (selected list)**

The following list of organizational entities represents a partial list of those that were consulted for this study. The list presents entities in alphabetical order and is organized into two parts. Part I categorizes entities according to their structure (NGOs vs. government entities), faith affiliation (faith-based or secular), and their location (Michigan or not). Part II provides a brief summary of each Michigan-based entity, including their most recently available financial information and describing their primary activities, focusing on features that are particularly relevant to this study.

#### **A.I. List of Organizations**

##### **Michigan Churches, Faith-Based Organizations, and Church-Affiliated NGOs**

All Worthy of Love (AWOL)  
Esther's Children  
Eve's Angels, Inc. NFP  
Grace Centers of Hope  
The Hope Project  
The Manasseh Project  
Michigan Abolitionists Project (MAP)  
Monarch Wings – Hope Against Trafficking  
My Sister Song  
Night Angels  
NorthRidge Christian Ministries

Northwest Oakland Abolitionist Hub (NOAH)  
Sister Survivors  
The Salvation Army Eastern Michigan Division  
The SOAP Project – Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution  
Vista Maria  
Women At Risk International (WAR)  
Woodside Bible Church

### **Michigan Organizations – not Faith-Based**

Alternatives for Girls (AFG)  
Ruth Ellis Center  
Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)

### **Michigan-based Government Entities**

Detroit Police Department (DPD)  
Joint Anti-Trafficking Task Force  
Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force  
Michigan State Police (MSP)  
University of Michigan Law School Human Trafficking Clinic (U-M HT Clinic)  
US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Detroit Office  
US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detroit Field Office  
US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Detroit Field Office  
Wayne County Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (WC SANE)

### **Non-Michigan Faith-based Organizations**

Beulah Isaiah 62 4 (Chicago, IL) EIN: 81-0719110  
Beauty from Ashes Ministries, Inc. (Zephyrhills, FL) EIN: 73-1730305  
Beloved Ministries, Inc. (Lexington, KY) EIN: 45-0645268  
Cupcake Girls (Las Vegas, NV) EIN: 45-3970815  
Girls Education and Mentoring Service (GEMS) (New York, NY) EIN: EIN: 13-4150972  
Glory House of Miami, Inc. (Miami, FL) EIN: 45-2947872  
Grit Into Grace (Fishers, IN) EIN: 81-5243791  
Jesus Said Love (Waco, TX) Bartimaeus Ministries, Inc.; EIN: 74-2977422)  
The Light in Darkness Ministry (Kokomo, IN)  
Loved Made Claim, Inc. (Lakewood, CO) EIN: 46-1407134  
Naomi Community (Spokane, WA) EIN: 20-1171003  
Pole Gems (Salem, OR) EIN: 45-4184659  
Rahab's Daughters (Barrington, IL) EIN: 47-3954009  
Reflections of Love Outreach Ministry (Atlanta, Georgia) EIN: 47-4126541  
Strip Church Network and XXX Church (Fireproof Ministries; EIN: 33-0823570)  
Stripped Inc. (Anderson, IN) EIN: 46-4053749  
Stripped Free (Fishers, IN) Tabor Ministries; EIN: 30-0045354  
Thistle Farms (Nashville, TN) EIN: 58-2050089

Treasures Ministries (Sherman Oaks, CA) EIN: 20-3596433  
True Vision Community Outreach (Knoxville, TN)

## **A.II. Detailed Description of Michigan-Based Entities**

### **Alternatives for Girls (AFG)**

Description: AFG is a multi-service provider for girls and young women (ages 4-21) with the following mission: helping “homeless and high-risk girls and young women avoid violence, teen pregnancy and exploitation, and helps them to explore and access the support, resources and opportunities necessary to be safe, to grow strong, and to make positive choices in their lives.” Established in 1988, it is the longest-running program specifically focused on preventing sexual exploitation of minor females in Detroit. At the time of this study, AFG had more than twenty full-time staff, hundreds of volunteers, and multiple programs including a residential shelter, comprehensive case management, day programs for older adult women sex workers, and an exceptionally successful afterschool program. To date, 100% of girls who participated in AFG’s after school program throughout their school years went on to enroll in four-year college. Guidestar categorizes AFG as follows: Temporary Shelter For the Homeless (NTEE Code: L41), Children's and Youth Services (NTE Code: P30), Youth Community Service Clubs (NTEE Code: O51), Temporary Shelters (NAICS: 624221), and Individual and Family Services (SIC: 8322).

Notable Features: AFG initially emerged from a church-based program. While AFG continues to partner with church’s and faith-based organizations to host educational events and to recruit volunteers, its programs are decidedly secular and adhere to a harm reduction framework. Residents must comply with behavioral guidelines. However, AFG does not require adult participants to stop using substances or cease participating in sex work in order to receive services. Maintaining a secular program is necessary per the terms of AFG’s primary grant funding streams. However, it does constrain the types of volunteers and donations it receives. The recent proliferation of similarly focused Christian organizations has challenged AFG, as religiously-motivated donors and volunteers forgo AFG in order to pursue service through faith-

based abolitionist organizations. At the time of this writing, AFG was working to re-establish its outreach programs to strip clubs and street-based solicitation sites in Detroit.

**Financial Summary:** At the time of this writing, AFG held \$5.4 million in assets, took in \$4.6 million in annual revenue, and expended \$5 million in gross receipts yearly.

**Selected Financial Information for Alternatives for Girls (EIN: 38-2766412)**  
Source: IRS Form 990 FY 2018 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$4,652,462

Primary Revenue Sources: Government Grants \$2,424,112; Contributions \$2,009,624; Special Events \$153,488

Primary Revenue Composition: Government Grants 52.1%; Contributions 46.5%;

Total Expenses: (\$4,116,391)

Primary Expenses: Program Services (\$3,340,230); Administration (\$425,795); Fundraising (\$350,366)

Primary Revenue Composition: Personnel (59.4%); Professional Fees (6%); Pass-Through (5.1%)

Revenue less expenses: \$536,071

### **All Worthy of Love (AWOL)**

**Description:** Established in Michigan in 2014, AWOL is a Christian non-profit organization that dispatches volunteers to reach out to trafficking victims in Detroit, Indiana, and Texas. AWOL relies heavily on its volunteers, largely drawn from local evangelical churches with whom it partners. In 2017 AWOL reportedly had one employee but managed more than one hundred volunteers in the city of Detroit alone. AWOL describes itself as a “justice focused non-profit that reaches out to men and women enslaved by street-prostitution.” AWOL describes its mission as “to restore broken dwellings, based on the teachings of Isaiah 58” through raising public awareness to “prevent” human trafficking, conducting weekly outreach to “rescue” victims, and to “restore victims” by referring them to service providers. Guidestar categories AWOL as follows: Human Services – Multipurpose and Other N.E.C. (NTEE Code: P99), Other Individual and Family Services (NAICS: 624190), and Individual and Family Services (SIC: 8322)

**Financial Summary:** At the time of this writing, AWOL reportedly held more than \$150k in total assets and reported more than \$64k in total revenue, primarily derived from donations and gifts

(nearly 100%). AWOL expended an average of \$78k in gross receipts annually, evenly split between personnel costs and direct costs from outreach and educational activities, each of which accounted from nearly fifty percent of AWOL's expenses in FY 2017.

Selected Financial Information for All Worthy of Love (EIN: 46-1610436)

Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$64,062

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$64,656; Fundraising \$10,210; Sales \$3,486

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 95%; Sales 4%

Total Expenses: (\$78,761)

Primary Expenses: Personnel (\$39,284); Other (\$39,041); Fundraising (\$10,475); Sold Goods (\$3,815)

Primary Expense Composition: Personnel (50%); Outreach/Rescue/Awareness/Expansion/Giving/Administration" (50%)

Revenue less expenses: (\$14,699)

### **Esther's Children (Esther's)**

Description: Established in southeast Michigan in 2011, Esther's provides Christian residential facilities that retrain trafficking victims in Brazil and Mexico for industrial careers outside of sex work. At the time of this writing, Esther's was piloting an outreach program in Michigan that would be focused on serving women and girls in Detroit. Esther's describes its mission as "preventing sexual exploitation, child prostitution and restoring its innocent victims in an environment where they can learn to love and be loved." Guidestar categorizes Esther's as follows: Children's and Youth Services (NTEE Code: P30), Christian (NTEE Code: X20), Youth Development Programs (NTEE Code: 050), Child and Youth Services (NAICS: 624110), and Individual and Family Services (SIC 8322).

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, Ester's annual revenue was just under \$254k and the organization held just under \$20k in total assets. According to its most recently available financial data (FY 2015), the group's primary expenses included "Pass-Through" costs and personnel costs.

Selected Financial Information for Esther's Children (EIN: 77-0657347)  
Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2015 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$253,957

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$229,807; Special Events: \$24,150

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 100%

Total Expenses (\$233,713)

Primary Expenses: Program Services (\$185,075); Administration (\$37,816); Fundraising (\$22,698)

Primary Expense Composition: Pass-Through (47.9%), Personnel (40.4%)

Revenue less expenses: \$20,243

### **Eve's Angels, Inc. NFP (Eve's Angels)**

Description: Officially registered with the IRS as a "church," since 2009, Eve's Angels conducted direct outreach to potential trafficking victims at strip clubs in Michigan before later expanding to Illinois, Indiana, and Florida, overseeing approximately 15-75 volunteers at any one time. Eve's Angels describes itself "a faith-based Survivor-led nonprofit organization that serves women in the commercial sex industry, including sex trafficked victims and all women in the sex for sale trade." Guidestar categorizes Eve's Angels as follows: Other Housing Support Services (NTEE Code: L80), Half-Way House (Short-Term Residential Care) (NTEE Code: P72), Christian (NTEE Code X20), Other Community Housing Services (NAICS: 624229), and Individual and Family Services (SIC: 8322).

Notable Features: Eve's Angels is a survivor-led organization, founded and managed by author Anny Donnewald. During the time of this research study, Eve's Angels secured \$575k in grant funding, primarily from the state of Michigan, which it used to purchase property for its future residential facility for former sex workers.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, Eve's Angels reportedly held approximately \$330k in total assets and nearly \$66k in annual revenue, primarily from government grants, which accounted for more than eighty percent of its annual revenue in FY 2017. Eve's Angels expended more than \$66k in gross receipts, primarily for personnel costs, which accounted for nearly eighty percent of its expenses in FY 2017.



Selected Financial Information for Eve's Angels, Inc. NFP (EIN: 26-3823877)  
Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$291,246

Primary Revenue Sources: Government Grants \$246,703; Contributions \$44,543

Primary Revenue Composition: Government Grants 84.7%; Contributions 14.7%

Total Expenses: (\$251,108)

Primary Expenses: Salaries and Wages (\$178,330); Utilities & Maint (\$16,134); Legal Fees (\$7,104)

Primary Expense Composition: Personnel (77.3%); Residential Facility Operations (10.3%); Administration (8.4%)

Revenue less expenses: \$40,138

### **Grace Centers of Hope (Grace)**

Description: Initially established as a tax-exempt non-profit in 1946, Grace is a multi-service residential and recovery facility for adults and families that is centered around its local church in Flint, Michigan. Grace describes its work as “positively changing the lives of the homeless, addicted and unwanted through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, personal accountability, life skills education and work-related programs.” Guidestar categorizes Grace as follows: Christian (NTEE Code: X20) and Religious Organizations (NAICS 813110; SIC 8661).

Notable Features: Grace intakes individuals that local anti-trafficking outreach ministries have identified as potential trafficking victims through its residential program for women. Grace proudly eschews all government funding, relying instead on donations and sales from its second-hand thrift stores, which residents staff. Grace emphasizes to donors how this funding decision maximizes its ability to combine therapeutic goals with evangelical religion ones.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, Grace held \$5.8 million in total assets and its annual revenue was just under \$7 million, primarily derived from donations, which accounted for more than ninety percent of its annual income in FY 2018. Grace expended about \$9 million in gross receipts, primarily for personnel costs, which accounted for nearly sixty percent of Hope's total annual expenses for FY 2018.

Selected Financial Information for Grace Centers of Hope (EIN: 38-6094602)

Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2018 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$6,954,644

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$6,623,225; Program Services \$268,220; Sales \$147,905

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 93.9%; Program Services 3.9%

Total Expenses: (\$7,287,187)

Primary Expenses: Program Services (\$6,066,096); Fundraising (\$759,079); Administration (\$462,012)

Primary Expense Composition: Personnel (59.9%); Occupancy (17.8%); Grants (2.7%)

Revenue less expenses: (\$332,543)

### **The Hope Project (Hope)**

Description: Established in Muskegon, Michigan in 2006, Hope is an independent organization that provides housing and other services to human trafficking victims with the following mission statement: “To support the healing of girls and women who have survived sex trafficking and prevent further cases through mentoring and education.” Located in western Michigan, Hope emerged from Hope Services, a public charity with evangelical origins that offered a residential facility for women and which is now primarily focused on serving trafficking victims. At the time of this writing, Hope was a member of the Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force as well as the Lakeshore Human Trafficking Task Force. Guidestar categorizes Hope as follows: Other Housing, Shelter NEC (NTEE Code: L99), Other Community Housing Services (NAICS: 624229), Individual and Family Services (SIC: 8322).

Financial Summary: The Hope Project received 501(c)3 tax-exempt status in 2007. At the time of this writing, Hope’s held just over \$160k in assets and had approximately \$200k in annual revenue, primarily derived from NGO grants and contributions, which accounted for more than ninety-percent of its revenue. Hope expended \$160k in gross receipts, primarily for personnel costs, which accounted for more than fifty-percent of Hope’s total annual expenses in FY 2017.

Selected Financial Information for The Hope Project (EIN: 35-2270341)

Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$169,886

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$193,036; Government Grants \$13,819

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 91.9%; Government Grants 8.1%

Total Expenses: (\$175,375)

Primary Expenses: Program Services (\$165,396); Administration (\$9,979)

Primary Expense Composition: Personnel (54.7%); Occupancy (14.8%); Professional Fees (8.3%)

Revenue less expenses: (\$5,489)

### **The Manasseh Project (Manasseh)**

Description: Located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Manasseh is an outreach ministry of Wedgewood Christian Services, which was initially established in 1970 as a youth residential facility - Wedgewood Acres-Christian Youth Homes. Manasseh specifically provides recovery services to minor victims of human trafficking. According to the group's mission statement: "Through community education and collaboration, and Wedgewood's Manasseh Project Trauma Recovery Center, Wedgewood's Manasseh Project provides support and specialized residential treatment services for victims of sex trafficking and empowers the people of West Michigan to end modern day slavery."

Notable Features: Manasseh's parent organization, Wedgewood Christian Services receives tax-exempt funding through the Wedgewood Foundation, which was established as a 501(c)3 organization in 1991 for this purpose. In FY 2017, the Wedgewood Foundation listed \$201,800 in contributions to "affiliate organizations," presumably to Wedgewood Christian Services, a portion of which is allocated to Manasseh. Guidestar categorizes the Wedgewood Foundation as follows: Christian (NTEE Code: X20) and Religious Organizations (NAICS 813110; SIC 8661).

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, the Wedgewood Foundation held approximately \$4.3 in total assets and its annual revenue was just over \$450k, primarily derived from donations and investment income, which accounted for more than eighty percent of its revenue.

Wedgewood Foundation expended about \$1.1 million in gross receipts, primarily for unspecified

“other” expenses, which accounted for more than ninety percent of the Wedgewood Foundation’s total annual expenses for FY 2017.

Selected Financial Information for The Wedgewood Foundation (EIN: 38-2939794)  
Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$346,327

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$185,728; Investments \$160,599

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 53.6%; Investment Income 28.4%

Total Expenses: (\$230,812)

Primary Expenses: Payments to Affiliates (\$201,800); Membership Dues (\$7,800);  
Professional Fees (\$19,428)

Primary Expense Composition: Payments to Affiliates (87%); Administration (13%)

Revenue less expenses: \$115,515

### **Michigan Abolitionist Project (MAP)**

Description: MAP is a volunteer-based organization that participates in the efforts of multiple anti-trafficking organizations in the state of Michigan. MAP describes its mission as helping “people to use their gifts and talents to prevent and end slavery in Michigan and beyond.” While MAP omits explicit references to religion from its mission statement, the group works primarily with faith-based groups. MAP was established prior to 2015, the year when it temporarily lost its tax-exempt status due to administrative oversight. Guidestar categorizes MAP as follows: Civil Rights, Social Action, and Advocacy NEC (NTEE Code: R99); Public Society Benefit-Multipurpose and Other NEC (W99); Human Rights Organizations (NAICS: 813311); Social Services, Inc. (SIC: 8399).

Notable Features: During the time that research was being conducted for this study, MAP played a central role in evangelical anti-trafficking efforts in the region. This included facilitating the establishment of new evangelical anti-trafficking organizations, including by recruiting donors. During this period, MAP also coordinated regular meetings of the “Freedom Coalition,” a networking group composed of leadership teams from local Christian anti-trafficking organizations. MAP hosted this regular meeting at the headquarters of the Salvation Army of E. Michigan MAP’s. During this time, MAP’s executive director also provided close support to the

JATT administrator at the Salvation Army, advising on decisions and facilitating referrals for trafficking victims who were under Salvation Army's care.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, MAP held \$84k in assets and extended \$127k in gross receipts. In FY 2018 MAP took in approximately \$104k in revenue, primarily from donor contributions, and incurred \$104k in expenses, the bulk of which were allocated to personnel costs; 75%.

Selected Financial Information for the Michigan Abolitionist Project (EIN: 45-4577135)  
Source: IRS Form 990 FY 2018 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$103,973

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$95,285; Special Events \$22,734; Sales \$3,390

Primary Revenue Composition: 92%; Special Events 22%; Sales 3.3%

Total Expenses: (\$104,178)

Primary Expenses: Salaries & Employee Benefits (\$77,950); Other Administrative Costs (\$13,042); Operations (\$12,728);

Primary Revenue Composition: Personnel (75%); Administration (12.5%); Operations (12.2%)

Revenue less expenses: (\$205)

### **Monarch Wings – Hope Against Trafficking**

Description: Established in 2014 in Pontiac, Michigan, Monarch Wings is an ecumenical organization that works to raise public awareness about human trafficking and to establish a future residential facility for female trafficking victims. According to its mission statement: “We believe that Love Transforms. On that premise, it is our mission to offer a safe place for survivors of trafficking to rediscover their dignity and rewrite the stories of their lives,” [sic]. GuideStar categorizes Monarch Wings as follows: Victims' Services (NTEE Code: P62), Other Individual and Family Services (NAICS: 624190), Individual and Family Services (SIC: 8322)

Notable Features: Despite more than five years of development, at the time of this writing, Monarch Wings had still not opened its residential program. Monarch Wings indicates that “spiritual growth” is a central part of the program, which explicitly models itself after Magdalene/Thistle Farms in Nashville, Tennessee. While the group's leaders emphasize that its

program is ecumenical, Monarch Wings maintains strong ties to Woodside Bible Church, a Detroit-based evangelical church, who's members serve as board members and who provides significant financial support for the group.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, Monarch Wings held nearly \$430k in assets and reported nearly \$330k in annual revenue, primarily derived from donations, which accounted for nearly all of its revenue in FY 2017. Monarch Wings expended about \$330k in gross receipts, administrative costs and program services, each of which accounted for approximately half of the group's expenses in FY 2017.

Selected Financial Information for Monarch Wings (EIN: 46-2932988)  
Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$380,805

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$375,617; Special Events \$4,790; Investments \$398

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 99.9%

Total Expenses: (\$123,595)

Primary Expenses: Administration (\$65,385); Program Services (\$58,210)

Primary Expense Composition: Facilities (Repairs, Maint, & Furnishings) (35%); Professional Fees (29.8%); Personnel (4.5%)

Revenue less expenses: \$257,210

## **Night Angels**

Description: Founded in 2016, Night Angels (EIN: 81-2739561) is a street-based Christian ministry that prays and distributes food to individuals who are involved in commercial sexual activity in Detroit. At the time of this writing, Night Angels is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization. Guidestar categorizes Night Angels as follows: Alliance/Advocacy Organizations (NTEE Code: X01), Other Social Advocacy Organizations (NAICS: 813319), Social Service (SIC: 8399), and Civil and Social Association (SIC: 8641).

Notable Features: Night Angels was founded by volunteers who had previously served on the board of AWOL.

Financial Summary: In its most recent filings, Night Angels lists \$0 assets and \$0 expenditures

**NorthRidge Christian Ministries, Inc. (NorthRidge)**

Description: Founded in 2005, NorthRidge (EIN: 32-012486) is a moderately sized evangelical Christian mega-church in SE Michigan. At the time of this writing, NorthRidge had nearly ten thousand active members attending weekly services across three church campuses in the Detroit metro area. NorthRidge describes its mission as follows: “Wake the World Up to Jesus. Show them His love. Tell them His Truth. Involve them. But within that is our vital goal to continually help you grow your relationship with God and your heart for His cause. Wherever you are, we're dedicated to meeting you there.”

Notable Features: Since 2015, NorthRidge has coordinated the “Love Runs” program, an annual fundraiser for Christian anti-trafficking programs in the area. Program participants (primarily NorthRidge congregants) train for the Detroit Marathon and solicit outside sponsorships in order to raise funds which the church donates directly to anti-trafficking ministries. The program raised more than \$250k in its inaugural year.

Financial Summary: Not available.

**Northwest Oakland Abolitionist Hub (NOAH)**

Description: Based on Oakland County, MI, NOAH represents a local branch of the Michigan Abolitionist Project (MAP). In conjunction with MAP, NOAH coordinates events to educate the public about human trafficking at local churches and community events.

Financial Summary: No information available.

**Ruth Ellis Center, Inc. (REC)**

Description: Established in Detroit, Michigan in 2001, REC provides “short-term and long-term residential safe space and support services for runaway, homeless, and at-risk gay, lesbian, bi-attractional, transgender and questioning youth.” In addition to their youth residential facility, REC also provides support services for LGBTQI adults. Guidestar categorizes REC as follows: Counseling Support Groups (NTEE Code: F60), Other Housing Support Services (NTEE Code: L80), Human Services - Multipurpose and Other NEC (NTEE Code: P99), All Other Outpatient Care Centers (NAICS: 621498), Specialty Outpatient Clinics, NEC (SIC: 8093).

Notable Features: REC’s focus on addressing homelessness among the LGBTQI makes it one of the few facilities available to transgender individuals in Detroit. REC’s harm reduction approach, which does not require its residents to cease participating in sex work as a precondition for aid, makes it one of the few facilities available to transgender sex workers in Detroit.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, REC held \$2.7 million in assets, generated \$2.7 million in annual revenue, and expended \$2.8 million in gross receipts.

Selected Financial Information for Ruth Ellis Center (EIN: 38-3501697)  
Source: IRS Form 990 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$2,762,768

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$1,596,271; Program Services \$832,390;  
Special Events \$255,029

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 67%, Program Service Revenue 26.4%,  
Government Grants 3%

Total Expenses: (\$2,253,325)

Primary Expenses: Program Services \$1,688,486; Administration \$466,136; Fundraising \$98,703

Primary Revenue Composition: Personnel (67.1%); Professional Fees (7.9%); Occupancy (4.9%)

Revenue less expenses: \$509,443

### **The Salvation Army Eastern Michigan Division (Salvation Army of E. Michigan)**

Description: Established in 1945, the Salvation Army of E. Michigan is a division of Salvation Army international that is located in Southfield, Michigan, just outside of Detroit. Officially



registered as a “church” with the IRS (EIN: 38-1370971), the organization describes itself as an “an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church” whose message is based on the Bible” and whose mission is to “preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.” Guidestar categorizes Salvation Army of E. Michigan as follows: Salvation Army (NTEE Code: P24); Fund Raising and/or Fund Distribution (NTEE Code: L12); Other Individual and Family Services (NAICS: 624190); Individual and Family Services (SIC: 8322).

**Notable Features:** In 2015, the Salvation Army of E. Michigan secured a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to lead the Joint Anti-Trafficking Task Force (JATT) and to administer grant funds to task force members. JATT members are composed of federal, state, and local law enforcement and non-governmental social service agencies in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties. The Salvation Army International describes its anti-human trafficking mission as follows: “Along with providing immediate refuge and relief for victims, we take a holistic approach to healing, helping each client move from a state of victimized enslavement to God-centered self-sufficiency.”

**Financial Summary:** According to the group’s most recently available financial audit (FY 2018), the Salvation Army of E. Michigan held nearly \$80 million in assets, took in \$79 million revenue annually, (primarily from government grants: 47%), and reported \$79.4 million in annual expenses (primarily for program services: 62.5%).

**Selected Financial Information for the Salvation Army of Eastern Michigan (EIN: 38-1370971)**  
Source: Financial Audit FY 2018

Total Revenue: \$78,916,171

Primary Revenue Sources: Government Grants \$37,154,049; Special Appeals \$15,482,383; Direct Contributions \$6,888,850

Primary Revenue Composition: Grants 47%; All Contributions (38%); Funds Transferred from Central Salvation Army (7%)

Total Expenses: (\$79,435,447)

Primary Expenses: Program Services (\$54,502,510); Administration (\$10,463,240)

Primary Revenue Composition: Personnel (39%); Management & General Costs (13%); Fundraising (0.8%)

Revenue less expenses: (\$519,276)

### **Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)**

Description: SWOP-Michigan is a local affiliate of SWOP-USA. Established in 2013 in California, SWOP-USA describes itself as “a national social justice network dedicated to the fundamental human rights of sex workers and their communities, focusing on ending violence and stigma through education and advocacy.” SWOP promotes research and policies to improve the safety and working conditions of professional sex workers, including by partnering with international affiliate groups. Through its conferences, special events, and website, SWOP provides advice for business development, professional sex techniques, safety strategies, and referrals to legal and financial professionals who have experience representing this community. Guidestar categorizes SWOP as follows: Civil Rights, Social Action, and Advocacy NEC (NTEE Code: R99) Public, Society Benefit - Multipurpose and Other NEC (NTEE Code: W99), Alliance/Advocacy Organizations (NTEE Code: R01), Human Rights Organizations (NAICS: 813311), Social Services, NEC (SIC: 8399).

Notable Features: During the time of this research study, SWOP-Michigan conducted a street-based anti-human trafficking outreach program to youth sex workers in Lansing, Michigan.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing SWOP held \$42,084 in assets, had generated \$257,174 in annual revenue, and had reported \$298,112 in gross receipts.

Selected Financial Information for Sex Workers Outreach Project SWOP-USA (EIN: 26-2264638)

Source: IRS Form 990 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$209,858

Primary Revenue Sources: Private Donations \$50,000; NGO Grants \$40,000; Corporate Donations \$25,000

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 100%

Total Expenses: (\$122,190)

Primary Expenses: Non-employee Compensation (\$56,772); Employee Compensation (\$22,687); Occupancy (\$7,964)

Primary Revenue Composition: Professional Fees (46.5%); Personnel (19%);  
(Occupancy (6.5%))

Revenue less expenses: \$87,668

### **Sister Survivors**

Description: In 2014 Sister Survivors (EIN: 47-4556120) established a peer-based survivor-led therapeutic recovery program for individuals who had experienced sex trafficking in Michigan.

At the time of the research for this project, Sister Survivor provided workshops, mentoring, service referrals, and material assistance for sex trafficking survivors. They also provided trainings for professionals. Guidestar categorizes AWOL as follows: as follows:

Alliance/Advocacy Organizations (NTEE Code: X01), Other Social Advocacy Organizations (NAICS: 813319), Social Service (SIC: 8399), and Civil and Social Association (SIC: 8641). No financial information is available.

Notable Features: Sister Survivors is a survivor-led organization, founded and led by author Alice “Jay” Johnson. In 2016 the IRS granted Sister Survivors 501(c)3 tax-exempt status. While the group is still active at the time of this writing, the IRS revoked its 501(c)3 status in 2019 due to failure to file a form 990.

Financial Summary: No information available.

### **SOAP Project – Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution (SOAP)**

Description: Established and headquartered in Ohio, SOAP started conducting anti-trafficking outreach at Detroit area hotels in 2010, first by partnering with established church and intervention groups and later securing independent 501(c)3 status. (The IRS most recently issued its ruling for SOAP in 2017.) According to its organizational mission statement, SOAP was “organized for charitable and educational purposes, specifically focused on educating and increasing awareness in the public on the prevalence of human trafficking, in order to restore trafficked survivors and to prevent teens from being victimized by domestic, minor, sex trafficking.” At the time of this writing, SOAP reported that it had four employees (one working

full-time) and managed more than four thousand volunteers in local SOAP affiliate chapters in eleven states nationally. SOAP volunteers duties include visiting locations where they believe human trafficking likely occurs (especially hotels) in order to circulate photos of recently missing children and distribute bars of soap and anti-trafficking fact sheets, all of which volunteers must wrap, collate, and purchase directly from SOAP. These efforts reportedly profiled 480 missing children in 2017. Guidestar categorizes SOAP as follows: Victim's Services (NTEE Code: P62), Alliance/Advocacy Organizations (NTEE Code: R01), Other Individual and Family Services (NAICS: 624190), and Individual and Family Services (SIC: 8322).

Notable Features: SOAP is a survivor-led organization, founded and managed by author Theresa Flores. Despite the absence of explicit religious or spiritual references its official documents, SOAP maintains extremely strong partnerships with local churches, who provide the majority of its volunteer based as well as its funding. Prior to securing independent 501(c)3 status, SOAP reportedly solicited tax-exempt donations through churches, which raised monies on SOAP's behalf. Additionally, SOAP has partnered with Catholic monastic communities to host spiritual retreats for survivors of human trafficking, thirty of whom participated in the group's "Journey of Grace Survivors Retreat" in 2017. SOAP is also affiliated with two additional unregistered organizations: TraffickFree and the SOAP for Hope Human Trafficking Youth Video Contest and Film Festival. Notably, TraffickFree not a tax-exempt organization but is instead registered with state of Ohio as a business, operated by SOAP's founder and through which she manages revenue from her speaking fees.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, SOAP reportedly held \$0 assets and expended \$0 in gross receipts. However, in its most recently available tax data (FY 2017), SOAP reported more than \$84k in revenue, \$3k in net assets, and \$42.7k in expenses.

Selected Financial Information for SOAP Project - Save Our Adolescents From Prostitution (EIN: 81-4743223)

Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$84,500

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$35,000; Special Events \$4,500

Primary Revenue Composition: not reported

Total Expenses: (\$42,700)

Primary Expenses: Program Services (\$30,500); Other Expenses (\$9,000);  
Administration (\$2,000)

Primary Expense Composition: Facilities/Office (37%); unspecified (30.7%); Travel,  
Vehicles, Meals & Entertainment (26%)

Revenue less expenses: \$41,800

## **Vista Maria**

Description: From 2014-2017, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCC) managed a residential program for minor victims of human trafficking in Michigan at the Vista Maria shelter. At the time of this writing, Vista Maria continued to operate as a youth shelter but was still working to re-open this trafficking-specific residential program. Vista Maria reportedly employs more than four hundred staff members to fulfill its mission: “To deliver innovative care, support treatment and education to vulnerable youth so that they heal, believe in their worth, and build the skills they needed to succeed.” Guidestar categorizes Vista Maria as follows: Religion Related, Spiritual Development NEC (NTEE Code: X99), Religious Organizations (NAICS: 813110), and Religious Organizations (SIC: 8661)

Notable Features: Established in 1965 as an independent organization, Vista Maria operates under direction from its parent organization: USCC. As such, Vista Maria represents one of hundreds of health and human service providers operated by the USCC throughout the United States. Because the USSC is registered with the IRS as a church, it is not required to file with the IRS and thus, not required to report its contributions to Vista Maria or any of the other subordinate organizations, which it manages. Despite the group’s direct connection to the Catholic Church, which provides funding, leadership, and administrative support, Vista Maria’s mission statement omits explicit references to religion and spirituality. Also, despite its religious ties, Vista Maria receives significant revenue from government grants, more than \$227 million from FY 2006 to 2018.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, Vista Maria reportedly held more than \$25 million in total assets and its annual income exceeded \$27 million, primarily derived from government grants, which accounted for nearly ninety percent of Vista Maria's revenue in FY 2017. Vista Maria expended approximately \$27 million in gross receipts, primarily for personnel costs, which accounted for more than seventy percent of Vista Maria's expenses in FY 2017.

Selected Financial Information for Vista Maria (EIN: 38-1359262)

Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$22,573,918

Primary Revenue Sources: Government Grants \$19,922,528; Contributions \$2,052,261

Primary Revenue Composition: Government Grants 88.3%; Contributions 8.8%

Total Expenses: (\$21,421,268)

Primary Expenses: Program Services (\$18,798,583); Administration (\$2,256,980)

Primary Expense Composition: Personnel (70.4%); Professional fees (13.3%); Other (5.6%)

Revenue less expenses: \$1,152,650

### **Women at Risk International (WAR)**

Description: Founded in 2007, WAR is a Michigan-based charitable organization that manages a roster of recovery programs and job-retraining facilities for trafficking victims in forty countries worldwide, including in the United States. The organization reportedly employs approximately 127 staff members but relies on a much larger community of volunteers. WAR's expansive program roster includes safehouses, vocational training programs, micro enterprise, education, orphanages, outreach, medical aid, and emergency intervention. WAR describes its mission as follows: "To unite and educate women to create circles of protection and hope around at-risk women through culturally sensitive, value-added intervention projects." Although WAR does not explicit reference spiritual or religious goals in its official mission statement, WAR maintains strong ties to evangelical leaders and churches who host WAR events and raise funds on WAR's behalf. The organization's prominent call for "prayer requests" on its home page confirms its spiritual goals to potential donors. Guidestar categorizes WAR as follows: International Relief (NTEE Code: Q33), Human Rights Organizations (NAICS: 813311), and Social Services, NEC (SIC: 8399).

Notable Features: WAR represents itself as promoting self-sufficiency; a primary activity of residents in WAR facilities is to produce crafts which WAR then sells online at fundraising events to sustain its work. While merchandise sales account for 35% of WAR's revenue in FY 2017, it is notable that the merchandise purchases accounted for more than 40% of WAR's expenses that same year. This raises questions about how WAR operates in actual practice. Specifically, questions about how WAR sources its merchandise and the extent to which the items that WAR advertises as having been produced by its residents are actually produced as such.

Financial Summary: At the time of this writing, WAR's annual revenue exceeded \$3 million and the organization held just under \$3 million in total assets. In FY 2017 the group's primary expense was for personnel costs, which accounted for more than fifty percent of its expenses that year. The group relies heavily on donor contributions (\$1.3 million in FY 2017), including those raised in conjunction with churches such as Woodside. Proceeds from merchandise sales also accounted for nearly half of WAR's revenue: \$1.2 million in FY 2017.

Selected Financial Information for Women At Risk International (EIN: 77-0664609)

Source: IRS Form 1099 FY 2017 and Guidestar

Total Revenue: \$3,051,254

Primary Revenue Sources: Contributions \$1,967,614; Sales \$1,058,728; Program Revenue \$15,561

Primary Revenue Composition: Contributions 64%; Sales 35%

Total Expenses (\$2,517,489)

Employee Compensation (\$1,031,039); Grants (\$63,982), Administration (\$337,326), Fundraising (\$180,798)

Primary Expense Composition: Personnel (50.6%), Merchandise (40.6%), Occupancy (5.8%)

Revenue Less Expenses: \$533,765

### **Woodside Bible Church (Woodside)**

Description: Established in Troy, Michigan in 1955, Woodside (EIN: 38-1974023) is an evangelical Christian mega-church with more than ten thousand members who meet regularly

across fifteen sites in the metro Detroit area. Woodside describes its mission as “Helping people belong to Christ, grow in Christ and reach the world for Christ.”

Notable Features: Woodside established the Unshackled ministry in 2016 in order raise awareness about human trafficking, facilitate anti-trafficking education events for its members, and to raise funds on behalf of Christian anti-trafficking outreach organizations in the area.

Financial Summary: Not available.



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Michigan Human Trafficking Resource Survey (MHTRS)**

Human trafficking is a pernicious problem whose harms are exacerbated by a lack of data, cultural bias, and persistent misconceptions about the social determinants that make individuals vulnerable to exploitation. Recent research reveals nearly one thousand individuals in Michigan are working to help those affected by human trafficking. Despite this, survivors and their advocates report significant barriers to accessing services in our state. The Michigan Human Trafficking Resource Survey (MHTRS) addresses this problem by identifying gaps and redundancies in services for trafficking victims and by helping build a comprehensive resource directory to enhance the referral process for survivors, advocates, and allies. The MHTRS accomplishes these goals by identifying gaps and redundancies in services provided in order to assess the state of anti-trafficking resources in the state of Michigan. In doing so, the MHTRS also responds to recent research that claims that many agencies do not participate in interagency collaboration related to human trafficking.

MHTRS is a web-based survey of 95 closed and open-ended items that was distributed via e-mail and through social media from May to July 2017. A total of 317 surveys were distributed to the research sample. As of July 2017, 195 organizations had completed the survey

for a response rate of 62%. The research sample was compiled from referral lists provided by members of the Joint Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (JATT), organizational data from long-term ethnographic research on the anti-human trafficking movement in Michigan, and a purposeful sampling of organizations identified as being geographically and culturally representative of public service providers in the state, including government agencies, health and human service providers, advocacy groups, and allied agencies in the educational sector and faith-based community from throughout the state of Michigan and Indian Tribal Nations.

### **MHTRS Sample Strategy:**

Snowball sampling was used, beginning with referral lists and organizations known based on ethnographic research, focusing on organizations in Michigan that explicitly engage in anti-human trafficking activities, including those that raise awareness about the issue and those that offer specialized programs or services designed for trafficking victims. Organizations identified as having the potential to come into direct contact with human trafficking in the course of the routine delivery of services they provide, but who may not offer trafficking-specific programs, were also consulted. Organizations in a variety of sectors were targeted, such as the criminal justice system (courts and law enforcement), health and human service providers, shelters and housing programs, faith-based entities, schools, and advocacy groups.

### **MHTRS Survey Instrument:**

- 100-question Qualtrics survey, with embedded logic to 1) target respondents for specific questions and 2) ensure responses from health and human service providers and law

enforcement and legal advocates and anti-trafficking groups. Survey questions covered a variety of topics including:

- 148 questions about the organization profile including contact information and regions of the state where organization offers services, how they identify and defined trafficking victims, and how they involved survivors in the decision making process of the organization;
- 10 questions about client eligibility requirements;
- 22 questions about types of services offered that would directly help victims;
- 10 questions about anti-trafficking activities (education, awareness, etc.);
- 21 questions about organisational policy and procedures including faith-based requirements, policies and procedures for working with trauma victims, individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities, transgender individuals, and non-English speakers. As well as referral procedures and costs and payment mechanisms (if applicable);
- 10 questions about the history of the organization

### **MHTRS Survey Delivery and Completion**

The MHTRS Web-based survey with 95 closed and opened-ended items was distributed via e-mail from May to July 2017. Three survey reminders were sent to those who had not completed the survey to provide them the chance to participate in the study. A total of 317 survey were distributed to the research sample. Of these, 195 completed the survey for a response rate of 62%.

APPENDIX C

Partial Timeline of Reform Events in Europe and North American (1802-2010)

Reform Actions by Type of Reform

	Sex Workers' Rights	Abolitionism	Regulation	Historical Context
1802			Bureau des Moeurs of Paris established. (Provides model of centralized regulation of prostitution until 1903.)	

1810	1810-1813 Prostitution regulated in Netherlands under Napoleon.	
1848		British Public Health Act advances sanitary reform and sets up local boards of health with power to investigate sanitary conditions.
1883		American Anti-Slavery Society founded to advocate immediate emancipation of African slaves in the United States.
1836	Parent-Duchatelet, French physician, advocates a "regulationist" approach, which regarded prostitution as a "necessary evil." Prostitutes were "necessary but dangerous," the "gangrene" of the lower and dangerous social classes who posed a threat to public health and social order but at the same time protected so-called 'virtuous' women.	
1847	In Sweden, from 1847, most prostitution was illegal but tolerated and regulated, including medical examinations and lock hospitals for venereal diseases.	

1851-1860		Widespread crop failure and famine in Ireland from 1851 to 1860, drives Irish immigration to the United States.
1861		U.S. Civil War 1861-1865
		Offenses Against the Person Act in Great Britain affirmed common law age of consent, 12 years old, and makes a felony sex with girls under 10. Protects young and wealthy, double standard for poor women.
1864	Contagious Disease empowers police to arrest and compel any women to a venereal disease exam in Great Britain.	
1872		American Public Health Association founded.
1873		Comstock Act criminalized publication, distribution, and possession of "obscene literature" including pornography and information about or devices or medications for abortion and contraception in the United States.

1875	<p>United States' Page Act outlawed the importation of women into the United States for the purposes of prostitution.</p> <p>British, Continental and General Federation for the Abolition of the Government Regulation of Vice was established, precursor organization to International Abolitionist Federation (IAF)</p>	
1877	Josephine Butler founds International Abolitionist Federation (IAF). Established in Geneva, the IAF sought to abolish regulated prostitution arguing that all prostitutes are 'victims.'	
1880		Advent of steam power ship engines enable expanded immigration to the United States.
1880-1930		From 1880 to 1930, 27 million individuals entered the U.S. as immigrants.
1878	Sweden: federal abolitionist office established.	
1885		Criminal Law Amendment Act in Great Britain raised age of consent from 13 to 16, criminalized act of coercing

		“underage girls” into prostitution, expanded state power for investigating and taking action against brothels and parents, expanded anti-homosexual laws.	
1886	Contagious Disease Acts repealed in Great Britain, largely due to activism from Butler and IAF.		
1891-1900			Mass migration from Southern Italy to the United States 1891-1900.
1897		New Orleans' Red Light district Storyville is established as result of expansion of prostitution regulation laws during Reconstruction Era. Ends 1917.	
1901-1910			Mass immigration of Russian and East European Jews to the United States, fleeing the anti-Semitic violence of Russian pogroms and ethnic tensions in East Europe.
1902	Publication of "The Social Evil," by the New York Committee, opposes regulation and includes recommendations such as improvements to housing, health care, and increasing women's wages.		



1904	International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic, ratified by 26 states, defines traffic as fraud, violence, threats or abuse of authority to compel, but only for "unwilling" women. Distinguishes "trafficking victims" from "willing prostitutes."	
1905	American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, Dr. Price A. Morrow, which was supposed to combat venereal diseases and prostitution. Argued that "[m]unicipalities can better devote their energies to teaching and warning against her than in regulating her in business. Education is cheaper and more effective."	
1910		Mann Act (The White Slave Traffic Act) made it a Federal crime in the United States for any person to transport across state lines "any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose" in the United States. Famous cases: Johnson v. United States

1914; Caminetti v. United States 1917

Ernest Bell writes "Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls"

1911

Netherlands bans brothels.  
(Article 250bis of the penal code)

1914-  
1918

WWI

1918

American Chamberlain-Kahn Act allowed U.S. government to quarantine prostitutes for the 'protection of the military and naval forces of the United States' any woman suspected of having venereal disease. The discovery of venereal infection upon examination could constitute proof of prostitution.

Sweden: after 1918, control of prostitution in Sweden was a national responsibility, under two laws, the Lex Veneris (1918) and the Vagrancy law (1885), dealing with disease and unemployment respectively, since money

earned through sex work was considered illegal.

1921

In Britain, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1921 (The White Slave Act) targeted working- class women.

1927

Germany decriminalizes prostitution.

1929-  
1939

Great Depression

1933

The International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women, does not distinguish between willing or unwilling women; abolitionist position codified in law.

1939

Germany regulates prostitution.

1939-  
1945

WWII

1941

Despite prostitution being illegal in Hawaii, "Entertainers" were registered in Honolulu and payed taxes from 1941-1944. Endorsed by U.S. military.

1946

France bans brothels, but prostitution is still legal.

1949	Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others: does not distinguish between forced or willing; requires signing countries to criminalize prostitution	
1959		Britain decriminalized prostitution but banned solicitation and other related activities with the Street Offense Act of 1959.
1971		In 1971 the U.S. state of Nevada began to formally regulate prostitution giving rural counties the option to license brothels.
1973	Formation of sex worker advocacy groups in the United States: COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), the first prostitute's rights group in the United States, is formed in San Francisco by Margo St. James. Similar groups form across the country form such as FLOP (Friends and Lovers of Prostitutes), HIRE (Hooking Is Real Employment), and PUMA	

	(Prostitute Union of Massachusetts Association).		
1981-82			First reports of AIDS (Auto-Immune Deficiency Syndrome), also see GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency).
1985	International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights held its first congress in Amsterdam in 1985. First international meeting of prostitute's rights groups.		
1999		Sweden criminalized the buying of sex.	
2000	Netherlands legalized brothels. "It is now legal to run a business where men or women over the age of consent are voluntarily employed as prostitutes. The person running the business must satisfy certain conditions and obtain a licence from the local authorities."	United States passes The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which is the cornerstone of Federal human trafficking legislation, and established several methods of prosecuting traffickers, preventing human trafficking, and protecting victims and survivors of trafficking. Reauthorized in 2000, 2003, 2008, 2013	
2002	German Prostitution Reform Law declared		

prostitution was no longer immoral, that pimping is legal if enforced with formal contracts, it increased access to state health insurance and pension schemes, and allowed prostitutes to sue their clients for non-payment.

2003 New Zealand Prostitution Reform Act decriminalizes prostitution and establishes a brothel system.

2009 Taiwan legalizes prostitution. Norway bans prostitution.

U.S. state of Nevada legalizes male prostitution.

2010 Canada lifts ban on brothels and soliciting prostitution.

## **APPENDIX D**

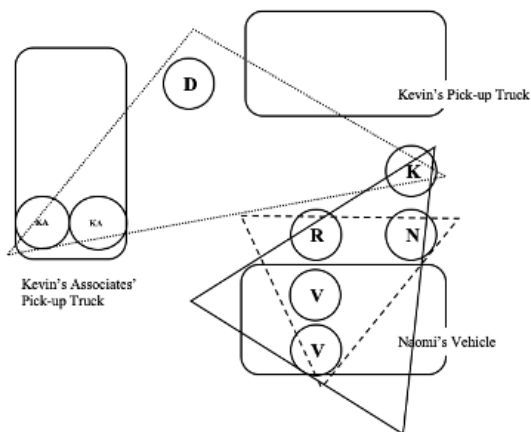
### **Devil's Den Transcript**

This transcript demonstrates how individuals sustain participation in multiple simultaneous interactions in close physical proximity, even as each of those interactions have goals that are understood to be in conflict or opposition. Specifically, this transcript does so in order to illustrate phenomena of “Frame Crossing Activity.” To do so, this transcript presents a segment of observed activity in a table that is organized horizontally (in rows) to identify utterances that occur across a segment of time as well as vertically (in columns) to identify how participants and their utterances are clustered in distinct interactions.

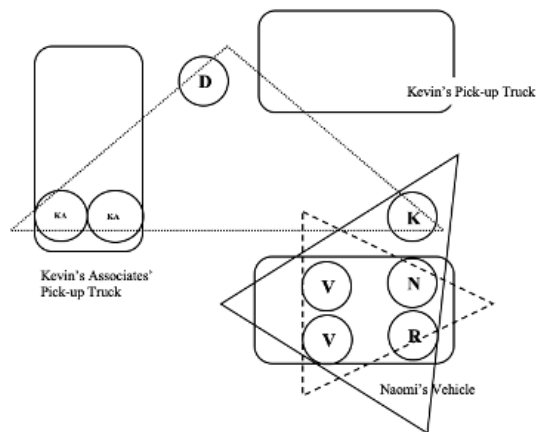
This segment of activity represented in this transcript was observed in the parking lot outside of a strip club in Detroit: The Devil's Den. Individuals participating in this segment of activity include volunteers from a Christian anti-sex trafficking ministry: Mary's Miracles as well as a part-owner of the strip club and his associates. In total, eight individual participants are represented. These include volunteers from Mary's Miracles: Naomi and the other Volunteers (including the Researcher). Also participating are Kevin (part-owner of Devil's Den) and Kevin's Associates (including his “friend” Davey). It is important to note that all eight

individuals present in the parking lot were within earshot of one another and thus, presumably, able to observe all activity taking place in the area at the time.

**Figure 18. Diagram of Interactions in Devil's Den Parking Lot**



Participant Positions in Transcript Lines 1-67.



Participant Positions in Transcript Lines 69-151.

#### Participants:

K = Kevin  
D = Davey  
KA = Kevin's Associates  
N = Naomi  
R = Researcher  
V = Volunteer

#### Interaction Frames:



Interaction Frame #1 = Naomi and other Volunteers (including Researcher)



Interaction Frame #2 = Kevin, Naomi, and other Volunteers (including Researcher)



Interaction Frame #3 = Kevin and Kevin's Associates (including Davey)

Figure 18 (shown above) presents the physical position of participants in relation to three



vehicles:

- Naomi's vehicle is parked head-in facing the Devil's Den building.
- Kevin's pick-up truck is parked parallel to Naomi's vehicle and is likewise parked head-in facing the building.
- Kevin's Associate's pick-up truck is parked behind the first two vehicles and perpendicular to them facing the back of the parking lot parallel to the building.

Individual participants are located in relation to these three vehicles. Note the change in position that occurs in line 67-68.

- The volunteers from Mary's Miracles are located in a single vehicle (Naomi's vehicle) as follows:
  - Naomi stands outside (lines 1-67) and then sits in (line 69-151) the front driver's side seat.
  - The researcher stands to left of Naomi outside of the rear driver-side passenger seat of Naomi's vehicle (lines 1-67) and then sits in the front passenger side seat of Naomi's vehicle (line 69-151).
  - Two ministry Volunteers sit in back seats of Naomi's vehicle.
- Kevin stands outside of Naomi's vehicle next to the driver side door.
- Kevin's associates are seated in third vehicle, which is parked behind the volunteers and the left of Kevin.
- Throughout this segment of activity, Kevin's friend Davey is walks back and forth between vehicles moving objects from the rear bed of Kevin's pick-up truck to the rear bed of Kevin's Associates' pick-up truck.

In the following transcript (below), utterances are clustered along the vertical axis into three distinct frames of interaction: Interaction Frames 1-3. The vertical axis is further subdivided by participant clusters. From left-to-right, these include the Volunteers, Naomi, Kevin, and Kevin's Associates. This transcript utilizes the vertical and horizontal axis in order to demonstrate how participants (especially Naomi and Kevin) repeatedly cross interaction frames first speaking with one another and then turning to their associates.

Additional features of speech are indicated by font format and special characters. Larger and smaller font size represents increased and decreased speech volume, respectively. Spacing between characters spacing indicates speed of speech, with increased and decreased spacing indicating faster and slower speech, respectively. Pauses in speech are marked with bracketed ellipses, for example: "[..5..]." Latching is represented by an equal-to symbol: "=". Overlap is represented with double forward slashes: "//." Utterances, which the speaker leaves unfinished are represented by a dash "—." Gestures, sounds, and other action are described in brackets, for example: "[laughs]." Arrows indicate the shift in interaction stance triangle following frame cross: "←" and "→."

Interaction Frame #1			Interaction Frame #2		Interaction Frame #3	
Mary’s Miracles			Kevin & Associates			
	Volunteers	Naomi	Kevin	Kevin's Associates		
1	→  I said [to him] “Ya know, we are a Christian ministry. // Just so he=we are clear.	←  So, Kevin wants like spirit in his life, like totally.  I’m so glad you mentioned that. (Laughs) What did he say? He mentioned Oscoda?				
2		[Sees Kevin walking towards the volunteers]. Hurry, open the door.	[Walks towards the volunteers.]			
Frame Cross						
3		→  [Naomi turns 180 degrees to face Kevin, establishing the neutral position for the interaction: upper and lower body at EWMN 0/2.]	←  [Kevin stands facing Naomi and the volunteers, establishing the neutral position for the interaction: upper and lower body at EWMN 0/2.]  Hey. If you didn’t meet.=This is Davey. One of my very close homeboy. We just want to make sure everybody gets	[Davey waves and smiles]		

			out here safe [...5..]	
4			So, you said yer from a Christian//	
5		=yeah		
6			=Right?	
7		=yeah		
		=Yeah =Yeah Right	Right. And then you gave me fucking mind twister just now. You're [Naomi] like 'I'm divorced.' [...2..] Fuck it. I'm like [...2..] Man, like all these people say that [...2..]. How //in the hell are you divorced, // if [you are also a Christian]? [...3..] Fuckin' if—if? [...2..] I dunno.  I don't got a clue, I don't know how it works, I-I dunno all the – [...3..]	
8		Awwwww.	But maybe you guys could fill me in on that later, and everybody could come and have a bonfire and hang out and barbeque and chill and go for a boat ride and take the kids fishing, <b>on</b> the property.	
9			You're more than welcome.	
10			You can look up the website for the house.	
11		So wha=uh so, being a true Christian and divorced?		
12			=I don't even know what Christian is, I can't tell you what catholic, Christian, Baptist. I can't tell you what any of it is.	
<b>Frame Cross</b>				
13			→ [Kevin, who was previously facing Naomi, turns upper body 90 degrees to his right to face his newly arrived associates. EWMN position 2/2 and 0/2.]  Thanks that'll work.	[Third vehicle arrives, parking behind and perpendicular to the first two vehicles.]

14				Hey. I'll see you at the house.
15			We going to my house?	
16		← [Naomi, standing outside the vehicle, turns her upper body 90 degrees to her right to face the Researcher and the volunteers who are seated in the vehicle. EWMN position 2/2 and 0/2.]		[laughter]
17	OK. Yes? No? What's going on?			
18		Let's leave right now. This is—	You're following me?	I follow you. Yeah.
19		=Let's pray to the Lord right now.	I got to go to work.	[unintelligible]
20			Yeah.	
<b>Frame Cross</b>				
21		→ [Naomi turns her upper body 90 degrees to left to face Kevin. EWMN position 0/2 and 0/2]  So, Kevin?	← [Kevin turns his upper body 90 degrees to left to face Naomi. EWMN position 0/2 and 0/2.]	
22			Yeah?	
23		OK, in a nutshell, to become a Christian is super, super easy.		
24			I don't even know what a Christian is.//	
25		=A Christian is	=I dunno about God	
26		Do you have a Bible?		
27			No, but people, there's god there's Jesus, there's Christ. There's whoever all this other people whoever they says [...].	

	[unintelligible]		Check this out.	
			There's way too many people to dial in in one night to even fucking think about.	
28			So what I am saying to you is hey, just come over and hang out at a bonfire and maybe you can explain it to me.	
29		=We would love that.		
30			You're more than welcome.//	
31		=OK. =We would love—	=Fish, bring the kids, family, husbands.	
32			I don't care. You guys are, you guys are gonna be more than safe even being here, here.	
33			Cause that's fuckin' crazy. That's insane.	
34		We're uh—	=why you guys come to uh the strip club.	
35	=To pray	We're for the girls to just love on em, and bring em stuff, and care about 'em, and bring 'em stuff 'n—		
36			Yeah but you guys are way too beautiful to bring yourself to the hood, like here.	
37		Oh [waives hand dismissively]		
38			You know what I mean?	
39	Nah, this is this is what it's about, right? They're beautiful too//			
40	=yeah, they're [dancers] beautiful too		I know, I mean—	
41		=And you're beautiful.	[laughs]	
42		You're a good guy.		

43			You like this, you go [inhales deeply and exhales] and you inflate for a minute.	
44		Yes	=You know what I mean?	
45			I don't know.	
46		Yes, yes, maybe.//	=Yeah	
47		=Hang in there.	Teach me something outside of SW Detroit, I need to get out of here, that's what I need to do.	
48			I need to go back the house.	
49		=Yeah go back to// the house // Yeah	I need to pull up a chair, and look at the water, and say I met these fucking girls, and they gave me a fucking mind twister. Like, right now.//	
50		=And I, you know what I gotta tell you? That you are a good man [slaps her hand on her knee] and God loves you [slaps] Jesus Christ loves you [slaps] and he loves you! [..2..] honest. [..2..]		
51	[unintelligible]	He loves me. [..3..]	So, so, so why did fuck did I just get shot and stabbed in all the middle of all that bullshit and why am i the living proof of tryin' to help the next person, ah, hang out you know what i mean? It just doesn't make sense to me. [..2..]	
52			Crazy. [..2..] Crazy, alright, well.	
53		It makes it easier [..2..] easier. [laughing]	Well, will you guys do me this one favor. If- if you guys feel safe at all?	

54		=You are very//sweet.	I live on this island and I want you guys to come out there and hang out, at least have a bonfire or a bbq and chill, bring you kids they can go fishin' on all the docks, they can do whatever they want, I'll open the store, they can fish inside, outside it doesn't matter. I promise.	
55	Yep		Hey you got my phone number, right?	
56	Yep, we'll call you.		=You gonna call me?	
57		=And I'll tell you what we are gonna do for sure is we're gonna pray for you.		
58			Ok	
59		We're gonna commit to pray for you.	=I-I wanna know this, though. When, when-when are you gonna call me by?	
60			I mean just to say "Hi."	
61	Oh, cause I'm so good at that, right ladies? [laughter]			
62		She's-she's so [busy]		
<b>Frame Cross</b>				
63		← [Naomi, standing outside the vehicle, turns her upper body 90 degrees to her right to face the Researcher and the volunteers who are seated in the vehicle. EWMN position 2/2 and 0/2.]  OK. OK.	→ [Turns upper body 90 degrees to right to face his associates. EWMN position 2/2 and 0/2.]  I'm with, I'm with [gestures towards Naomi's vehicle]. I'll meet you at the marina right now.	
64	My husband would be like 'you're fuckin' crazy.'			[unintelligible]



65		Yep. OK.		
<b>Frame Cross</b>				
		→ [Naomi turns her upper body 90 degrees to left to face Kevin. EWMN position 0/2 and 0/2]	← [Kevin turns his upper body 90 degrees to left to face Naomi. EWMN position 0/2 and 0/2.]  When am I gonna get a phone call?	
66			It doesn't matter when or when, where.	
67			[Points to back window of Naomi's vehicle.] Get in, get in. You guys are cold.	
68		We're freezing. [Naomi and researcher move to inside of Naomi's vehicle.]	[Kevin places his foot on threshold of Naomi's open car door, preventing her from closing the door.]	
69			I don't care if you are just saying: "Hey Kevin, what's up?" OK?	
71	OK, Can we go now? How 'bout—	We'll do it together.	You don't gotta come down [to my house]—I'm just sayin'—	
72		How about we'll do it during Bible study?		
73			I went to catechism when I was like seven so—	
74	[laughter]	You do, you do have some Christian background?		
75			No.	
76		You do!	=No, no the whole day was boring.	
77			[Leans in towards Naomi.] They like, hey, they passed this basket around to asking for money, and I was like I'm as broke as a motherfucker, thinking "Why ain't getting any?"	
78	That's a story for you			
79			Alright? It's a great story.	

80	I got a great story about that too.			
81			I'm just tellin' I got a <b>great</b> story, let me tell you. My family—	
82	I have a great story too.			
83			=Sh-sh-sh your story. [...5..] Family? You got a good story about that?	
84	Yeah.			
85		Can I close [the car door and] open the window?	[Kevin removes his foot from Naomi's car door threshold.]	
86		[Naomi closes her car door and lowers the window.]	Yeah, yeah, open the window. [Kevin places his hands on threshold of lowered window.]	
87		They were crazy.	//This is the weird thing about this, is my crazy grandparents were just nuts about this whole church thing.	
88			It didn't matter if it was the most boringest thing in my life. you know. wait.	
89		They were <b>praying</b> for you.		
90		M-hm  M-hm  M-hm	Listen, no one was praying for me. [laughs] They took me to this goddam church ok? And it was the most boringest thing. And they made me eat fucking chip. And It was stale. This bread that they kept talking about. And my grandma was really [pause] I didn't believe it, any of it. And I got my mom and dad on one saying "don't do it" and I got my grandma and my grandpa sayin' "You're goin' with us or you're gonna be miserable for this weekend." [...2..] And all I'm like, "I'd rather play hockey." [...2..] And they're all like "Well you're an asshole because you are fightin' on the ice and being a crazy kid." And my grandma is like "You gotta go to church." [stern voice, leaning in, deep voice]. and I'm like "I'm not doing it. There's no way I'm goin' there." The pastor has his basket givin' money away and I'm not getting any money [upspeak] from any of this stuff [pause] and it's retarded because my parents were teaching me this stupid shit. Now I'm [...2..] I'm more open-minded.	

91			And now you guys come along and you're talkin' about, the shit that everybody else's been talking about and you're like "Do you believe in god?" and I'm like "Not really." I said ya' cause the one thing that really bothers me about the whole believin' in God thing [upspeak]	
92		What?		
93			Is 'cause you guys are talkin' like there's this one person who overrules everybody, right or uh or that that they call god or whatever, k?	
94		m-hm		
95			I don't believe in that because you know why? 'Cause there ain't a godman bible I picked up yet being anymore that even talks about being a dinosaur. [...2..] Now what? Now what? And I-I-I physically went in there and seen this dinosaur shit!	
96	But the bible's not—			
97			Well there's just not—	
98	Well, don't worry, don't worry about that one			
99	Awww	Awww //No you're not.	It's just nothing. There this shit in my brain. I dunno. I'm fucked up. I'm a fucked up individual and I been hit in the head with a hockey puck way too many times.	
100			I-I'm being real with ya.	
101		No, you are seriously a precious child of God. We all are. He fearfully and wonderfully made you.		
102			I don't even know what that is. That's what I'm sayin' you guys are talkin' about this one person there's a God, there's—	
103		I know it doesn't make sense.		
104			And my whole family's like "No" and then you got the family over there like "We're goin' to church" [...5..] and	

		Right, you got some <b>confusion</b> goin' on.	then like no don't believe it nothing. There's nothin' out there. this is all crazy and then other one's going like all.	
105		So, can I ask you a question?		
106			You can ask me—	
107		How-are	//whatever you want.	
108		How are-how are you sad inside? Are you, uh?		
109			Dude, I'm, I'm, I'm like, I'm like, out of this world. Like, there's like nobody that can—	
110		Are you happy?		
111			Hell no!	
112		Yeah, yeah, I know	//There's no way	
113		And see this is the thing. And this is what Christ does. This the most beautiful thing.		
114			Ok, so now you just said two different people.	
115		Jesus and Christ, Lord Jesus, Lord God, Jesus and God	//God, Jesus and everyone.	
116		Well, they're all, they're all, they're all one. There's just different names for it [upseak] [...] But I hit rock bottom like you, miserable, awful terrible. I got to that point		
117			I don't think I even hit rock bottom.	
118		Ok		
119			I just think, I don't believe in nothing.	
120		Ok, you—		
121			//Like, there's nothing I believe in, at all.	
122	But you don't like that.	But you're you're-you're miserable		
123			I go to work every day and I make more money than everybody and money ain't even//	

124		=It doesn't matter.		
125			Well, it does matter and it doesn't.	
126		Peace and your—		
127			//I got everything in the world and it's just not happenin'.	
128		//I know,	Like, I got all the money.	
129		=We've all been there	I got everything and I'm just like damn, this sucks man.	
130		I know. And that's where Christ comes in. That's where Jesus Christ comes in and he comes in to fill that void. and he makes it peace and joy.		
131		That's why that's, we would never do this if we didn't have it.		
132			I don't even understand the fact here of what you guys. I mean, I got it.	
133		So, when you go back to your dock today, uh, tonight and you just sit there and you say "God I don't even know what those girls were talkin' about and if there's even a Jesus, then God."		
134			//Oh, it's going to happen. it'll probably happen on the way home like fuckin'.	
135		//And that, and that and just say "Jesus if you, just come into my life. I'm sorry for the mess I've made in my life and I 'm sorry. And I pray you forgive me and I just [..2..] take over.		
136			Check this out.	
137	Just ask him and he'll speak to you.		This might be weird but when I, I, I got into trouble when I was younger. Ok?	
138		Ok.	Not like, not like doin' nothin' evil or like hurtin' nobody or nothin' like that.	
139		M-hm, yeah.	Like I—	
140		//I can tell you are a nice person.		

141			I said, I said “If there’s any time that please I need help is right now I’m going to court. Fuckin’ please help me. Talk to me, whatever.” Ain’t nobody responded back. It’s like I’m on my fuckin’ own!	
142		No, you’re not! [laughs]	[laughing] I’m goin goin’ to court and I’m like “Hey there you’re getting fuckin’ locked up kid. See ya later.” And they took me away.	
143		You were in trouble. did you get in trouble?		
144		[Naomi tells the story of her ex-husband going to prison.] So I’ve had it really tough too you know.	Fuck yeah! They took me away when I was a juvenile for years  [Kevin tells the story of how he prayed and he still got in trouble with the court - juvenile detention for selling weed, 2 the first time, 2 the second time, his best friend’s family beat him up.]	
145			I can’t even believe you guys even come in here tonight. There’s like “wow, this even happened?”	
146		We sometimes, we think we are coming in for the girls but then we come in for you.		
147			It’s funny because these guys [gestures to his associates in other vehicle] are like “Kevin, what the fuck are you doin’?” I’m like “They are tryin’ to tell me something that like happened in my life.”	
148		Mhm	This not normal [...5..] I don’t know why this happened. Or what just happened? [...5..] I had a full ride scholarship to Lake Superior state to lay hockey. I was going to be drafted to the NHL. [...5..] I got everything handed to me. I make \$45/hour union great benefits. My grandpa came from Mexico 60 years ago and blessed me. He gave me a house and a yacht club. [...5..] But, I want the kids back man. The kids are the shit.	

### Frame Cross

149		[EWMN position 0/2 and 0/2.)	→ [Turns upper body 90 degrees to right to face his associates. EWMN position 2/2 and 0/2.]  OK you are ready?	
150			Yeah	[unintelligible]
<b>Frame Cross</b>				
151		[EWMN position 0/2 and 0/2.)	← [Kevin turns his upper body 90 degrees to left to face Naomi. EWMN position 0/2 and 0/2.]  Do me one favor. Just call me.	

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Estimated Total Number of Human Trafficking Victims Identified by U.S. Law Enforcement**

**Annually based on 2015-2016 Reporting**

In 2016, ICE reports having identified 400 trafficking victims in total across the United States. In 2015, the FBI reports that a total of 797 trafficking victims were reported identified by US Law Enforcement. Assuming no duplicate reporting between ICE and the UCR, combining these numbers suggests that approximately 1200 individual human trafficking victims were reportedly identified by law enforcement annually in the United States for FY 2016.

The table below lists reported human trafficking arrests and victims identified by state, including comparing instances of sex trafficking vs. labor trafficking. Federal crime data for human trafficking primarily reflects reporting from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency and the Department of Justice (DOJ)'s Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR). The UCR includes federal FBI data as well as crime statistics reported by more than 1400 local, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies. While these numbers reflect only reported identified victims from a subset of law enforcement agencies and thus should not be seen as exhaustive, they do reflect the vast majority of victims identified in any given year.



Figure 19. Reported Human Trafficking Victims Identified by US Law Enforcement in 2015 (FBI Crime Data for FY 2015)

Reported HT Victims Identified by US Law Enforcement in 2015							
State	Total Agencies Reporting	Sex Traffick Arrests	Labor Traffick Arrests	Total HT Arrests	Sex Traffick Victims	Labor Traffick Victims	Total HT Victims
Alabama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alaska	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	124	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	296	0	0	0	4	0	4
California	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	249	1	2	3	11	6	17
Connecticut	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	698	0	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hawaii	3	1	0	1	2	0	2
Idaho	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	735	0	0	0	18	1	19
Indiana	70	2	1	3	0	0	0
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kentucky	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Louisiana	176	4	0	4	0	0	0
Maine	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	155	4	9	13	9	0	9
Massachusetts	60	0	2	2	0	2	2
Michigan	657	0	0	0	3	0	3
Minnesota	39	67	0	67	115	0	115
Mississippi	52	0	6	6	0	0	0
Missouri	637	7	0	7	7	0	7
Montana	114	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	45	8	24	32	214	2	216
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New York	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Carolina	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio	58	0	0	0	4	1	5
Oklahoma	75	14	0	14	38	2	40
Oregon	140	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	506	3	0	3	12	4	16
South Dakota	137	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	464	2	0	2	37	3	40
Texas	1080	538	27	565	98	186	284
Utah	145	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vermont	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	255	0	0	0	13	0	13
West Virginia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	116	0	0	0	4	0	4
Wyoming	57	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1463</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>797</b>
Source: FBI Crime Data Explorer HT Crime Dataset							
<a href="https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/downloads-and-docs">https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/downloads-and-docs</a>							
Last modified, January 1, 2017							

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